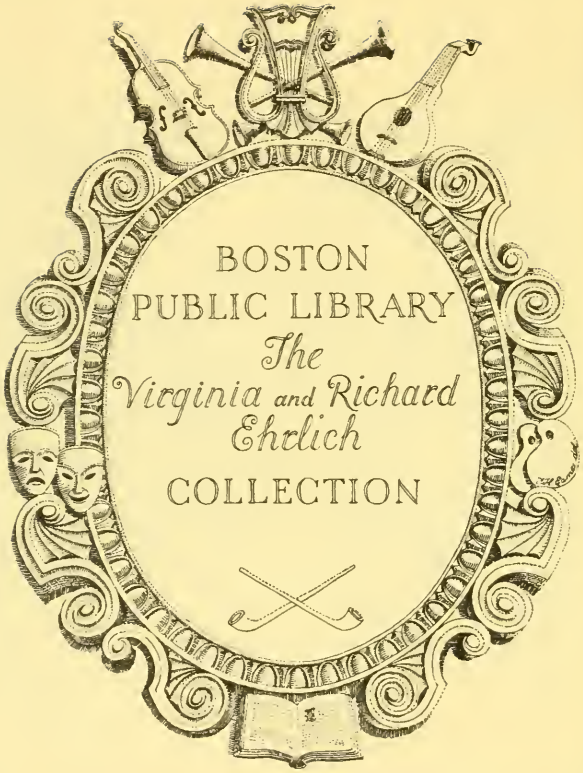
CHINA UNDER THE EMPRESS DOWAGER

J. O. P. BLAND &
E. BACKHOUSE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CHINA UNDER THE EMPRESS DOWAGER

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(SOME LONDON PRESS OPINIONS)

"Rarely is a book written round State papers which is at once so sound in learning, so informing, and so fascinating to read as this. It publishes for the first time documents which, but for the diligence of the authors, would probably never have come under English eyes; it gives us an enthralling narrative of the vicissitudes of feeling and policy in the Forbidden City at the time of the Boxer rising and the attacks on the Legations in Pekin; and it comes as near as any book could to explaining the enigmatic character of the Empress Dowager. She was the Queen Elizabeth of the Chinese Throne. No one who wishes to understand the China of the last half-century—we might say also the China of immemorial ages—should leave this book unread."—*The Spectator.*

"For the first time this remarkable volume lifts the veil that diplomacy had allowed to fall over the share of the Empress in the events of 1900. It is a document more illuminating than perhaps any that has ever come out of China. We see, as in a looking-glass, the inner life of the Palace. It presents for the first time a vivid and coherent picture of the whole career and character of the masterful woman who was for half-a-century a *de facto* ruler of the Chinese Empire. Historically this document is of the highest importance."—*The Times.*

"Of the greatest possible interest. The diary affords a panorama of Chinese Court life in its most poignant moments, such as without doubt has never before been offered to European judgment. The whole of the historical narrative is carefully wrought and closely argued; the authorities consulted are first-hand and valuable; and the picture is always full of movement and colour."—*The Daily Telegraph.*

"The authors have done more than write an admirable biography. They have given a picture, authoritative, instructive, and absorbingly interesting, of the tangled skein of China's political vicissitudes in the last sixty years. And it is out of the China of yesterday that the China of to-morrow must emerge."—*The Daily News.*

"We have the Empress Dowager to the life . . . . a vital, arresting, commanding woman, whose word was law in China for half-a-century. It is a narrative that holds one with an intense fascination. This sober record of events surpasses in interest the wildest fancies of romantic writers."

—*The Daily Chronicle.*

[*Frontispiece*

THE "HOLY MOTHER," HER MAJESTY TZŬ HSI.

(*From a photograph taken in* 1903)

CHINA UNDER THE EMPRESS DOWAGER

BEING THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TZŬ HSI

COMPILED FROM STATE PAPERS AND THE PRIVATE DIARY OF THE COMPTROLLER OF HER HOUSEHOLD

BY

J. O. P. BLAND AND E. BACKHOUSE

NEW AND REVISED CHEAPER EDITION

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PREFATORY NOTE

H.R.H. PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA AT THE COURT OF TZŬ HSI

THE Authors have been honoured by the following communication from His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Prussia concerning his audience with the Empress Dowager on the 15th of May 1898. The account herein given of the circumstances which led to the first reception of the ladies of the Diplomatic Body at the Court of Peking is of permanent interest, and the Authors gratefully avail themselves of the opportunity which presents itself, in preparing the revised edition of this work, to make it public.

. . . . . .

"Whilst holding an appointment as Rear-Admiral, Second in Command of the German Cruiser Squadron in China in 1898, I had the opportunity of visiting Peking and of being admitted to an audience before the late Empress Dowager and the late Emperor.

"I was given to understand that an audience of this kind was quite out of the common, and that no European had, in the past, ever stood before a Chinese Empress so long as Chinese history existed, but that it had been Her Majesty's particular wish to receive me on this occasion, probably much against the wishes of her advisers, though perhaps her object was to prove that she was the sovereign in power.

"The audience took place on the 15th of May 1898, at the Summer Palace, Wan Shau-Shan, on which occasion all

the pomp of a Chinese ruler was displayed; the audience with the Emperor took place after I had been to see the Empress.

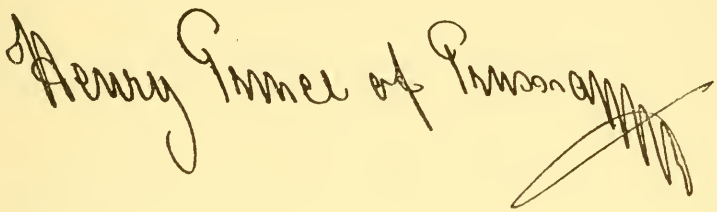
"The day before my reception, I had called on the Foreign Ministers in Peking, making the acquaintance of the British Minister, Sir Claude Macdonald and of Lady Macdonald. They both showed a keen interest in next day's event; so much so that, in the course of conversation, Lady Macdonald asked me if I would mind conveying a message to the Empress Dowager on behalf of the ladies of the Foreign Legations then residing in Peking. I consented, whereupon Lady Macdonald requested me to ask the Empress whether she would be willing to receive the ladies of the Foreign Legations at any time, or on any day, that would be convenient to Her Majesty. I promised I would do my best, should a favourable opportunity present itself, but that I could not, of course, guarantee my success, knowing nothing of the circumstances under which I would be received nor being sufficiently acquainted with Chinese etiquette.

"The occasion did present itself, however, during a lull in the conversation, when I shot my bolt and laid the question before Her Majesty, who, after some considerable hesitation, answered that she was willing to receive the ladies in about a fortnight or three weeks' time.

"On my return to Peking, this news was received with much enthusiasm, and, as far as I recollect, the ladies were received some three weeks afterwards. Should there be any doubt about my statements, I am sure Sir Claude as well as Lady Macdonald will confirm them.

"The reason why I mention these facts is that, at the time, this interview created quite a sensation and was looked upon as a new departure in Chinese history, which, to the best of my knowledge, it was. Furthermore, I refer to them because there is no mention of these proceedings in the famous book *China Under the Empress Dowager,* which otherwise contains so many interesting details of the late Empress's life. Probably the Authors were

ignorant of the aforesaid facts, which, I think, merit to be related, inasmuch as they form a missing link in the description of the life of that great and powerful ruler, for whom, since I saw her, I always have had the greatest admiration.



"KIEL: *February* 1912."

CONTENTS

I

PAGE

THE PARENTAGE AND YOUTH OF YEHONALA 1

II

THE FLIGHT TO JEHOL 13

III

THE TSAI YÜAN CONSPIRACY 26

IV

THE FIRST REGENCY 40

V

TZŬ HSI AND THE EUNUCHS 51

VI

MAJORITY AND DEATH OF THE EMPEROR T'UNG-CHIH . . 74

VII

THE PROTEST AND SUICIDE OF WU K'O-TU 88

VIII

TZŬ HSI BECOMES SOLE REGENT 100

IX

TZŬ HSI "EN RETRAITE" 109

X

THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898 119

XI

PAGE

THE HUNDRED DAYS OF REFORM 128

XII

THE *COUP D'ETAT* OF 1898 136

XIII

TZŬ HSI RESUMES THE REGENCY (1898) 145

XIV

THE DIARY OF HIS EXCELLENCY CHING SHAN . . . 166

XV

THE FLIGHT FROM PEKING AND THE COURT IN EXILE . . 217

XVI

THE OLD BUDDHA PENITENT 235

XVII

THE RETURN OF THE COURT TO PEKING 242

XVIII

HER MAJESTY'S NEW POLICY 258

XIX

HER MAJESTY'S LAST DAYS 270

XX

TZŬ HSI'S DEATH AND BURIAL 290

XXI

CONCLUSION 297

INDEX 317

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE "HOLY MOTHER," HER MAJESTY TZŬ HSI . *Frontispiece*

MAP OF PEKING . . . . . *p.* xiv–xv

To face page

THE REGENT PRINCE CH'UN, WITH HIS TWO SONS, THE YOUNG EMPEROR (STANDING) AND PRINCE P'U CHIEH . 4

THE IMPERIAL DAIS IN THE CHIAO-T'AI HALL . . . 16

HER MAJESTY TZŬ HSI IN THE YEAR 1903 32

EXTERIOR OF THE CH'IEN CH'ING PALACE 42

H.M. TZŬ HSI, WITH THE CONSORT (LUNG YÜ) AND PRINCIPAL CONCUBINE (CHIN FEI) OF H.M. KUANG-HSÜ, ACCOMPANIED BY COURT LADIES AND EUNUCHS 58

INTERIOR OF THE I KUN KUNG 100

CIRCULAR THRONE HALL IN THE GROUNDS OF THE LAKE PALACE LOOTED BY ALLIED TROOPS IN 1900 . . 142

PAVILION ON LAKE TO THE WEST OF FORBIDDEN CITY . . 142

FACSIMILE OF A FRAGMENT OF THE DIARY . . . *p.* 211

To face page

MARBLE BRIDGE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE LAKE PALACE . 226

IN THE GROUNDS OF THE PALACE IN THE WESTERN PARK . 226

HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE TSAI HSÜN 242

To face page

H.M. THE EMPRESS DOWAGER AND LADIES OF HER COURT (1903) 256

VIEW, FROM THE K'UN MING LAKE, OF THE SUMMER PALACE 278

THE EMPRESS DOWAGER, WITH THE CHIEF EUNUCH, LI LIEN-YING 282

THE SON OF HEAVEN 286

PORTRAIT OF THE EMPRESS DOWAGER 302

THE IMPERIAL DAIS IN THE CH'IEN CH'ING HALL . . 316

INDEX TO NUMBERED MAP OF PEKING

(1) Tung Hua Men, the East Gate Glorious. This is the usual entrance to the Forbidden City for officials attending audience when the Court is there resident. (It was here that was suspended in a basket the head of the foreigner captured by the Boxers on 20th June.)

(2) Huang Chi Tien, or Throne Hall of Imperial Supremacy. In this Hall the Empress Dowager, after the return of the Court from exile, was accustomed to receive her officials in audience on the rare occasions when she lived in the Forbidden City. It was here that her remains lay for nearly a year awaiting the day of burial.

(3) Ning Shou Kung, or Palace of Peaceful Longevity. Here the Old Buddha resided during the siege; here she buried her treasure. She returned hither after the days of exile and lived in it pending the restoration of the Lake Palace, desecrated by the foreign occupation.

(4) Chien Ching Kung, or Palace of Heavenly Purity. The Hall in which China's Emperors were accustomed to give audience to the Grand Council. After the Boxer rising, in accordance with the new ceremonial laid down by the Peace protocol, the Diplomatic Body were received here. In this Hall the Emperor Kuang Hsü discussed and decided with K'ang Yu-wei the reform programme of 1898, and it was here that his body lay awaiting sepulture between November 1898 and February 1909.

(5) Shen Wu Men, or Gate of Divine Military Genius. Through this, the Northern gate of the City, the Old Buddha fled in the dawn of the 15th August 1900.

(6) The Rock Garden in which Her Majesty used to walk during the days of the siege of the Legations and from which she witnessed the burning of the Han-lin Academy.

(7) Yang Hsin Tien, or Throne Hall of Mental Growth. In this Palace the Emperor T'ung-Chih resided during the whole of his reign.

(8) Hsi Hua Men, or West Gate Glorious. One of the main entrances to the Forbidden City.

(9) Tai Ho Tien, Throne Hall of Exalted Peace. Used only on occasions of High ceremony, such as the accession of a new Emperor, an Imperial birthday celebration, or the New Year ceremonies.

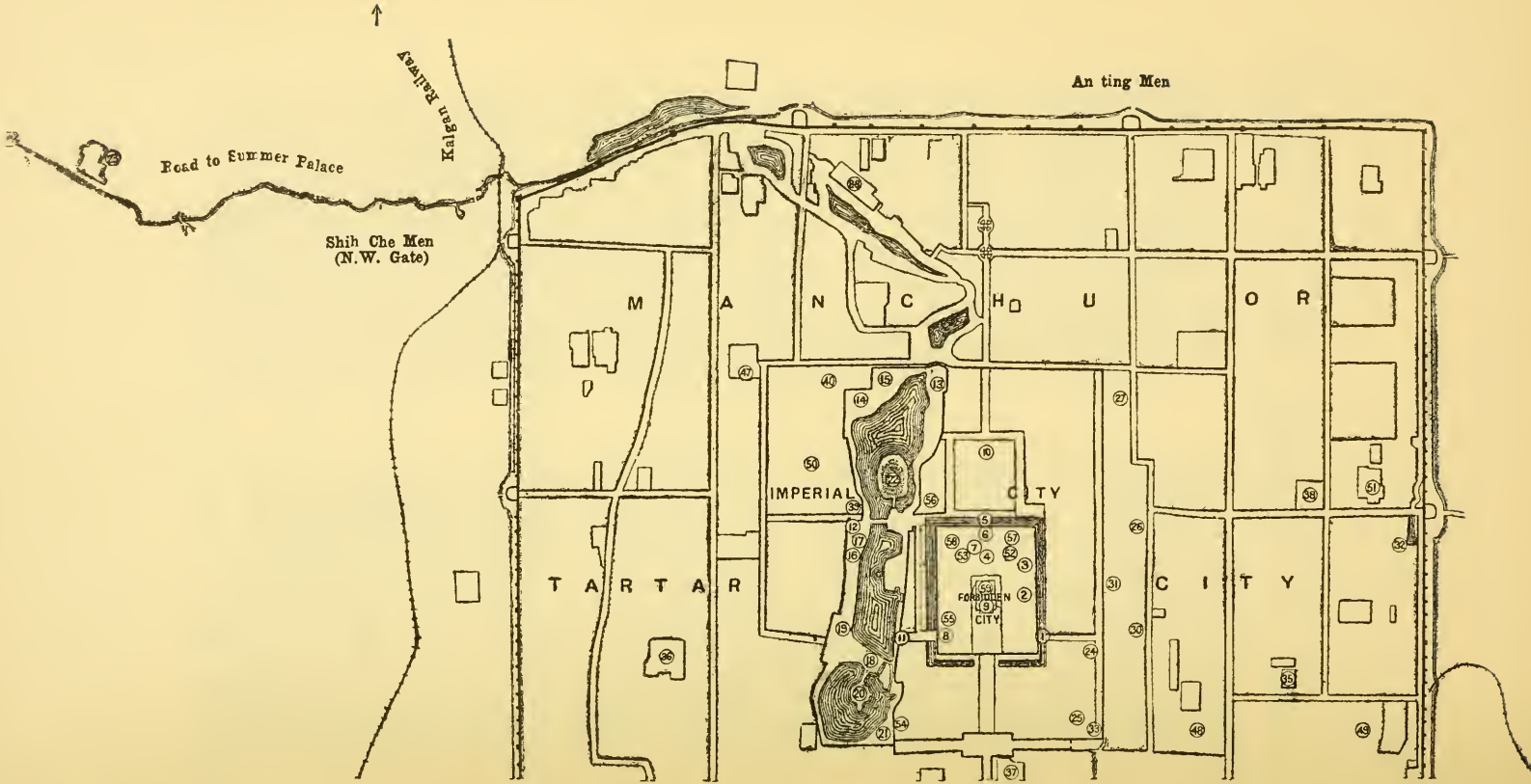
(10) Shou Huang Tien, or Throne Hall of Imperial Longevity. In this building the reigning sovereign unrolls on the day of the New Year the portraits of deceased Emperors, and pays sacrifice to them.

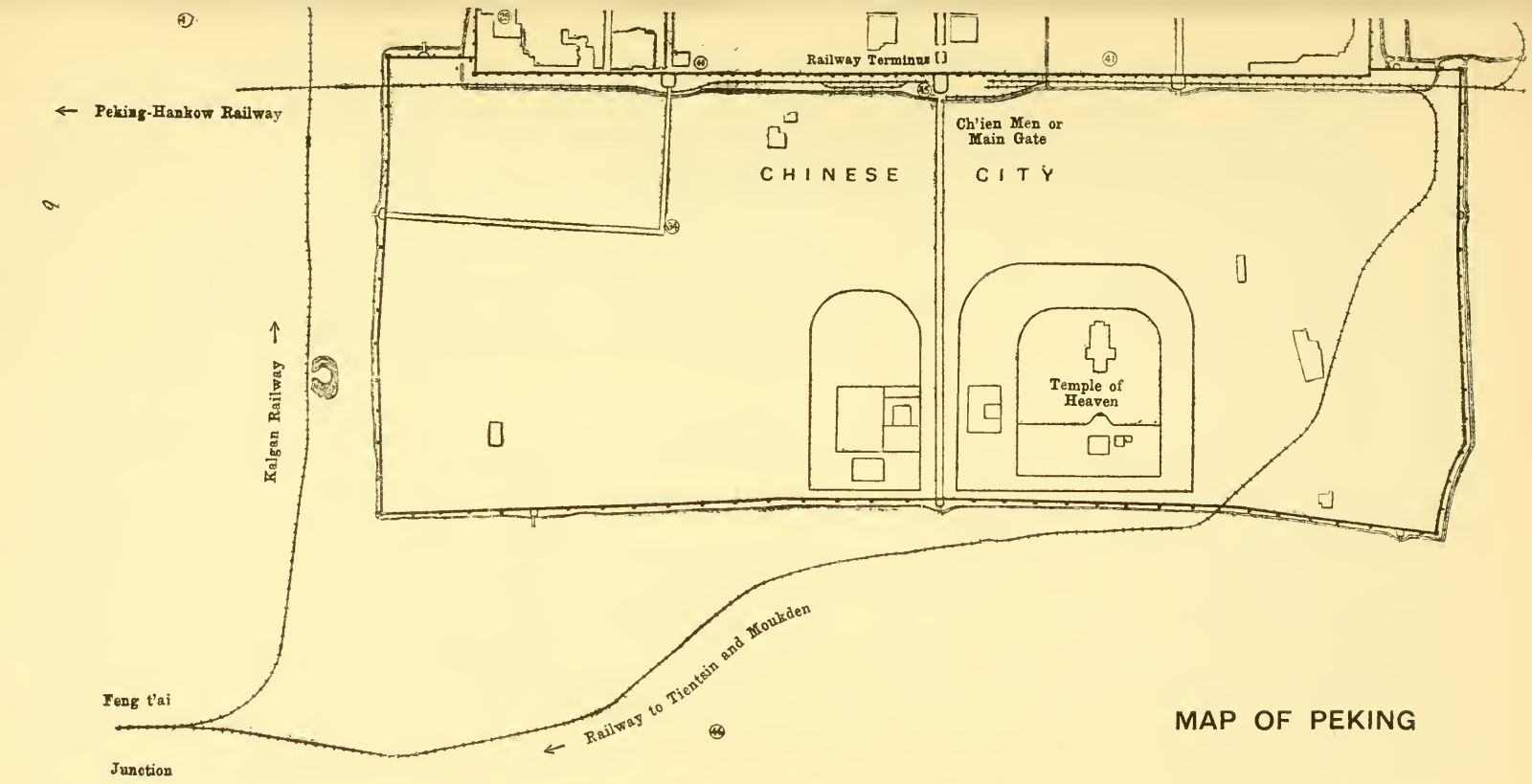
(11) Hsi Yüan Men, Western Park Gate. It is through this that the Grand Council and other high officials pass to audience when the sovereign is in residence at the Lake Palace.

(12) At this gate the Emperor was wont to await, humbly kneeling, the arrival of the Old Buddha on her way to or from the Summer Palace.

(13) The Altar of Silkworms, at which the Empress Consort must sacrifice once a year, and where the Old Buddha sacrificed on occasion.

(14) A Lama Temple where the


Kalgan Railway
Road to Summer Palace
Shih Che Men
(N.W. Gate)
An ting Men
M A N C H U O R
IMPERIAL CITY
T A R T A R
C I T Y
FORBIDDEN CITY



MAP OF PEKING

For index to this Map see reverse pages.

Old Buddha frequently worshipped.

(15) Ta Hsi Tien, the Temple of the Great Western Heaven. A famous Buddhist shrine built in the reign of the Emperor Kang Hsi.

(16) The Old Catholic Church built within the Palace precincts by permission of the Emperor Kang-Hsi. It was converted by the Empress Dowager into a Museum in which was kept the collection of stuffed birds made by the missionary Père David. Eye-witnesses of the siege of the French Cathedral in 1900 have stated that the Empress and several of the ladies of the Court ascended to the roof of this building to watch the attack on the Christians; but it is not likely that they exposed themselves for any great length of time in what must have been a dangerous position.

(17) Tzŭ Kuang Ko, Throne Hall of Purple Effulgence. The building in which the Emperor is wont to receive, and entertain at a banquet, the Dalai and Panshen Lamas and certain feudatory chiefs. Before 1900 Foreign Envoys were also received here.

(18) Ching Cheng Tien, or Throne Hall of Diligent Government. Used for the audiences of the Grand Council when the Court was in residence at the Lake Palace.

(19) Li Yüan Tien, Throne Hall of Ceremonial Phœnixes. Part of the Empress Dowager's new Palace, built for her in the early years of Kuang Hsü's reign. Here she received birthday congratulations when resident at the Lake Palace, and here she gave her valedictory audience, just before her death.

(20) Ying Tai, or Ocean Terrace, where the Emperor Kuang Hsü was kept under close surveillance after the *coup d'état* in 1898, and which he never left (except on one occasion when he attempted to escape) between September 1898 and March 1900. By means of a drawbridge, this Ocean Terrace was made a secure place of confinement. After the return of the Court in 1902, His Majesty lived here again, but under less restraint, and it was here that he met his death.

(21) At this point stood the high mound which Her Majesty is reported to have ascended on the night of 13th June 1900, to watch the conflagrations in various parts of the city.

(22) The White Pagoda, built in the time of the Yüan dynasty (*circa* 1290 A.D.), when the artificial lake was also made.

(23) Wan Shou ssŭ, the Temple of Imperial Longevity. Here the Empress was accustomed to sacrifice on her journeys to and from the Summer Palace.

(24) The residence of Ching Shan, where the *Diary* was written.

(25) The residence of Wen Lien, Comptroller of the Household and friend of Ching Shan.

(26) Residence of Jung Lu.

(27) Place of the Princess Imperial, the daughter of Prince Kung, whom the Empress Dowager adopted.

(28) Birthplace of the present infant Emperor, Hsüan T'ung, son of Prince Ch'un and grandson of Jung Lu. In accordance with prescribed custom, it will be converted into a shrine.

(29) Birthplace of H.M. Kuang Hsü. Half of this building has been converted into a shrine in honour of HisMajesty and the other half into a memorial temple to the first Prince Ch'un, grandfather of the present infant Emperor.

(30) Pewter Lane, where Yehonala was born.

(31) Palace of Duke Chao, younger brother of Tzŭ Hsi.

(32) Palace of Duke Kuei Hsiang, elder brother of Tzŭ Hsi and father of the present Empress Dowager.

(33) At this point was erected the scaffolding from which guns were trained on the Legations. The soldiers on duty here were quartered in the house of Ching Shan.

(34) The execution ground where were put to death the Reformers of 1898 and the Ministers who, in 1900, protested against the attack on the Legations.

(35) The residence, in 1861, of Tsai Yüan, hereditary Prince Yi, who was put to death by Tzŭ Hsi for usurping the Regency.

(36) Residence of Tuan Hua, the Co-Regent with Tsai Yüan, also allowed to commit suicide in 1861.

(37) The Imperial Clan Court, in which is the "Empty Chamber," where the usurping Princes met their deaths.

(38) Residence of the "Beileh" Tsai Ying, son of Prince Kung, cashiered for complicity in the Boxer rising.

(39) The site of the Chan-Ta-ssu, a famous Lama Temple, destroyed by the French in 1900 for having been a Boxer drilling ground.

(40) Residence of the Chief Eunuch, Li Lien-ying.

(41) Now the Belgian Legation premises, but formerly the residence of the Boxer protagonist, Hsu T'ung, that fierce old Imperial Tutor whose ambition it was to have his cart covered with the skins of foreign devils.

(42) The Imperial Canal, by way of which the Old Buddha used to proceed in her State barge to the Summer Palace.

(43) The graves of the Empress Dowager's parents. They are adorned with two marble pillars, bearing laudatory inscriptions.

(44) Here was erected the temporary railway station at which the Empress alighted on her return from exile.

(45) In the north-west corner of the enceinte of the Chien Men, a shrine at which the Empress Dowager and the Emperor sacrificed to the tutelary god of the dynasty (Kuan Yü), the patron saint of the Boxers.

(46) At this point many Christians were massacred on the night of the 13th June 1900.

(47) Palace of Prince Chuang, the Boxer leader, mentioned by Ching Shan as the place where the Christians were tried.

(48) Residence of Yuan Ch'ang, where he was arrested for denouncing the Boxers.

(49) Residence of the Grand Secretary, Wang Wen-shao.

(50) Residence of Yang Li-shan, the President of the Board of Revenue, executed by order of Prince Tuan.

(51) Residence of Duke Lan, the Boxer leader. At present occupied by Prince Pu Chün, the deposed Heir to the Throne and a most notorious reprobate.

(52) Tzŭ Ning Kung, or Palace of Maternal Tranquillity, where the Empress Dowager Tzŭ An resided during most of the years of the Co-Regency.

(53) Chang Ch'un Kung, or Palace of Perpetual Spring, where Tzŭ Hsi resided during the reign of T'ung Chih.

(54) Residence of the actors engaged for Palace performances.

(55) The Nei Wu Fu, or Imperial Household Department Offices.

(56) The Taoist Temple (Ta Kao Tien), where the Emperor prays for rain or snow.

(57), (58) In these two Palaces resided the chief Imperial concubines. After Tzŭ Hsi's resumption of the Regency in 1898, Kuang Hsü and his consort occupied small apartments at the back of her Palace, on the brief visits of the Court of the Forbidden City.

(59) Chung Ho Tien, or Throne Hall of Permanent Harmony. Here H.M. Kuang Hsü was arrested in September 1898 and taken away to confinement in the "Ocean Terrace."

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF HIGH OFFICIALS

AND

OTHER PERSONAGES MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK

(1) Prince *Tun* ("*generous*"): honorific title of Yi Tsung, fifth son of Emperor Tao Kuang. He was adopted to be son to his uncle, Mien K'ai, son of Emperor Chia-ch'ing (1796–1820).

(2) Prince *Tuan* ("*orthodox*"): honorific title of Tsai Yi, second son of Prince Tun; he was adopted to be son of I-Yo, Prince Jui, grandson of Chia-ch'ing.

(3) Duke Tsai Lan: third son of Prince Tun, a Boxer leader.

(4) Prince *Kung* ("*respectful*"): honorific title of Yi Hsin, sixth son of Tao Kuang. Born Jan. 11, 1833, died May 29, 1898.

(5) Prince Ch'un ("*generous*"): seventh son of Tao Kuang. Born Oct. 16, 1840. Died Jan. 1, 1891.

(6) Tsai T'ien: the Emperor Kuang Hsü, second son of Prince Ch'un. Canonized as Emperor "*Virtuous and Illustrious*"; Married Yehonala, daughter of Duke Kuei Hsiang, who survives him and is now the Empress Dowager *Lung Yü* ("*blessed and prosperous*").

(7) Tsai Feng: the present Regent. Third son of Prince Ch'un by a concubine. (His personal name is taboo.)

(8) P'u Yi: Emperor Hsüan-Tung, son of (7).

(9) P'u Lun: son of Tsai Chung; is now president of National Assembly. In the legitimate line of succession he was the rightful heir to the Throne.

(10) Duke Tsai Tsê: grandson of Prince Hui, the fifth son of Emperor Chia Ch'ing. He married the Empress Lung Yü's sister. Is generally considered one of the strongest Manchus now in office.

(11) *Beileh* Tsai Ch'u: son of Prince Fu ("*trustworthy*"), ninth son of Emperor Tao Kuang. Cashiered and imprisoned by Tzŭ Hsi at the time of the *coup d'état*; restored to office by Regent on the same day that Yüan Shih-k'ai was dismissed. He married Tzŭ Hsi's favourite niece.

(12) Prince Su (" *reverential* ") : descended from a younger son of Nurhachu. He is one of the eight " Iron-capped " Princes, whose titles are hereditary for ever.

(13) Prince Cheng (" *sedate* ") : named Tuan Hua, one of the usurping Regents. An " Iron-capped " Prince and descendant of Nurhachu.

(14) Prince Yi (" *harmonious* ") Tsai Yuan : one of the usurping Regents. Descended from younger son of K'anghsi.

(15) Jung Lu : kinsman and favourite official of Tzŭ Hsi.

(16) Huai Ta Pu (son of Grand Secretary Jui Lin, who commanded the Manchu force at the battle of Pa-li-chiao against the British and French forces in 1860) : a kinsman of Tzŭ An. He committed suicide in 1900, overcome by his grief and wrath at being forced by the Japanese troops to work at carting sand amongst a crowd of coolies.

(17) Kuei Hsiang : Duke Kuei, younger brother of Tzŭ Hsi and father of Lung Yü.

(18) Duke Chao : younger brother of Tzŭ Hsi and father of Duke Tê.

(19) The Princess Imperial, or Ta Kung chu : daughter of Prince Kung (No. 4 above). Specially adopted as daughter by Tzŭ Hsi; now a widow with three sons, all holding appointments in the army.

(20) Lady Liu : wife (originally concubine) of Jung Lu. The Empress Dowager's closest friend.

(21) Po Chün : Grand Secretary. Decapitated as the result of Su Shun's jealousy in Hsien Feng's reign; grandfather of Na T'ung.

(22) Na T'ung : Grand Councillor and present head of Foreign Office. Probably the most powerful of the Regent's advisers and the head of his party.

(23) Ch'i Ying : was Manchu viceroy of Canton after Treaty of Nanking; was allowed to commit suicide, at Yehonala's suggestion, for failing to procure withdrawal of the foreign warships from Tientsin in 1856. He was considered to have leanings to Christianity, which made him the more unpopular.

(24) Su Shun : one of the usurping Regents of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy.

(25) Chon Tsu-p'ei : Grand Secretary during 1st regency.

26) Kuei Liang : Grand Secretary during 1st regency.

(27) Ho Shen : the famous Grand Secretary under the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, who was allowed to commit suicide by Chia Ch'ing. Said to have accumulated £14,000,000 in bullion.

(28) Ching Shan : Grand Councillor on T'ung-Chih's succession.

(29) Mu-Yin : Grand Councillor on T'ung-Chih's succession.

(30) Muyanga : sometime Taotai in Kuangsi ; father of Empress Tzŭ An, and benefactor of Tzŭ Hsi.

(31) Ch'ung Ch'i : father of A-lu-te and tutor to Heir Apparent, P'u Ch'ün. Was President of Board of Revenue ; his suicide was recorded by Jung Lu.

(32) Prince Chuang, Tsai Hsün (*Chuang*, honorific title, meaning "*austere*") : a Boxer prince and descendant of younger son of Nurhachu.

(33) Tsai Kung, Duke Kung : younger brother of Prince Chuang, and now inheritor of latter's title. Tzŭ Hsi restored the hereditary princedom on the ground that it would be an insult to Nurhachu's memory if it were abolished.

(34) Kuei Pao : Minister of Household under T'ung-Chih.

(35) Wen Hsi : Minister of Household under T'ung-Chih.

(36) Kuei Ching : uncle of Tuan Fang ; Minister of Household.

(37) Tuan Fang : ex-Viceroy ; cashiered in 1909. It is recorded that on one occasion the Empress Lung Yü, observing that he stared at her, exclaimed : "Had her late Majesty been in my place, where would your head have been !" Tuan Fang is unpopular with Manchus for his outspokenness. At the time of his cashiering, was impeached by Li Hung-Chang's eldest grandson and heir, Li Kuo-chieh (now Minister at Brussels). He lives in retirement, but is said to be intriguing to secure Lung Yü's favour and a post in the new cabinet.

(38) Ch'en Tu-en : one of Hsien Fing's high officials ; removed from office by Tzŭ Hsi.

(39) An Te-hai : favourite eunuch of Tzŭ Hsi ; decapitated in Shantung by orders of her Co-Regent, the Empress Tzŭ An.

(40) An Wei-chun : Censor, removed from office and banished at Tzŭ Hsi's instigation, in 1895, for criticising her private life. Restored to office in October 1910 by the Regent, and given a high place at Court.

(41) Chang Chih-tung : Grand Councillor and Grand Secretary. Died Oct. 1909.

(42) Chang Yin-huan : native of Canton; an adherent of the Emperor Kuanghsü; he was banished by Tzŭ Hsi, and decapitated by Prince Tuan's orders. Posthumous honours have been conferred on him by the Regent.

(43) Chao Shu-ch'iao : native of Shensi; allowed to commit suicide (on account of his Boxer proclivities) at Hsi-an Fu in 1901.

(44) Ch'en Pao-chen : governor of Hupei; Kuang Hsü's adherent; cashiered by Tzŭ Hsi.

(45) Empress Chia Shun (" *admirable* and *obedient* ") : honorific title conferred on A-lu-te after the death of her husband, the Emperor T'ung-Chih.

(46) Ch'i Hsiu : Manchu Grand Councillor, and Boxer leader; decapitated at Peking by order of the Empress Dowager on the demand of the Allies in 1901.

(47) Ching Hsin : Manchu Grand Secretary and Imperial Clansman.

(48) Ching Shan : Manchu Vice-President of a Board (*vide* biographical note at page 166).

(49) Ching Yüan-shan : Prefect of Shanghai; cashiered in 1900 for requesting Tzŭ Hsi to restore the government to Kuang Hsü.

(50) En Ch'u : eldest son of Ching Shan.

(51) En Hai : murderer of German Minister in June, 1900.

(52) En Lin : son of Ching Shan.

(53) Hsü Ching-ch'eng : sometime Minister to Berlin and St. Petersburg; put to death by Tzŭ Hsi for his pro-foreign proclivities; posthumous honours have been conferred on him by the Regent.

(54) Hsü Shih-ch'ang : native of Chihli; formerly one of Yüan Shih-k'ai's secretaries; now a Grand Councillor.

(55) Hsü Chih-ching : a reformer condemned to perpetual imprisonment after the *coup d'état*, and released after the fall of Peking in 1900.

(56) Hsü T'ung : Grand Secretary and Boxer leader; committed suicide in 1900 on fall of Peking.

(57) Hsü Ying-ku'ei : native of Canton; dismissed as a reactionary by H.M. Kuang Hsü; reappointed to office by Tzŭ Hsi and appointed Viceroy of Fuhkien and Chekiang.

(58) Hsü Yung-yi : a native of Chekiang; President of the Board of War; put to death by Prince Tuan in Aug. 1900 for sympathising with foreigners.

(59) Hui Chang : Manchu Censor and Imperial Clansman ; one of the moderates in 1900.

(60) Hui Cheng : Taotai of Anhui ; father of Tzŭ Hsi ; posthumously raised to a dukedom.

(61) Kang Yi : leading Boxer and prominent Manchu reactionary ; died during Court's journey in 1900.

(62) K'ang Yu-wei : leader of the reformers of 1898 ; sentenced to death and price put upon his head after his escape. Will probably be pardoned by the present Regent and permitted to return to China.

(63) Liang Ch'i-ch'ao : K'ang Yu-wei's colleague, lieutenant, and fellow exile. Will also probably be pardoned by the present Regent and given office.

(64) Liao Shou-heng : native of Kiangsu ; Grand Councillor from March 1898 to Dec. 1899.

(65) Lien Yüan : Manchu executed by Prince Tuan in Aug. 1900 for pro-foreign proclivities. Has since received honour of canonisation by Decree of the Regent ; he and Li Shan (*vide* below) have had shrines erected to their memory in Peking.

(66) Li Lien-ying : successor of An Te-hai as chief eunuch of Tzŭ Hsi's Household.

(67) Li Hung-chang : native of Anhui ; Viceroy of Canton, Tientsin, etc., and Peace negotiator in 1900.

(68) Li Hung-tsao : native of Chihli, for many years a Grand Secretary and Grand Councillor.

(69) Lin Hsü : one of the reformers put to death at the *coup d'état* ; posthumous honours will be given to him by the Regent.

(70) Li Ping-heng : native of Manchuria ; assistant generalissimo in July 1900 ; committed suicide.

(71) Prince Li : (honorific title means "*ceremony*"). Personal name Shih To ; senior of the eight "Iron-capped" Princes, being a descendant of Tai shan, the second son of Nurhachu ; was on the Grand Council for some years ; still living (1911), and is head of Imperial Clan Court ; lost most of his fortune in 1900.

(72) Li Shan : Manchu President of a Board and Comptroller of the Household ; friend of Jung Lu ; noted for his collection of art treasures ; put to death by Prince Tuan in Aug. 1900 ; Canonisation since conferred on him by Regent. (*vide* 65 : Lien, Yüan).

(73) Li Tuan-fen : a native of Kueichou and partisan of Kuang Hsü; banished to the new Dominion by Tzŭ Hsi. Died in 1904. Has since received posthumous honours by order of the Regent.

(74) Liu Kuang-ti : one of Reformers executed in September 1898.

(75) Liu K'un-yi : native of Hunan; Viceroy of Nanking in 1900. Chiefly instrumental in preserving order in the Yangtse valley. Died in 1902, and canonised as "*Loyal* and *Sincere.*"

(76) Lü Hai-huan : native of Chihli; sometime Minister to Germany; subsequently Director General of Tientsin-Pukou Railway; a protégé of Tzŭ Hsi ; now out of office.

(77) Ma Yü-k'un : native of Anhui. A rough, illiterate soldier, highly esteemed by Tzŭ Hsi, who issued a decree bidding her Manchu kinsmen imitate his loyal devotion. He accompanied the flight of the Court in 1900. Died September 1908.

(78) Lady Niuhulu : clan name of Tzŭ Hsi's mother.

(79) Prince Seng-ko-lin-chin : a Mongol prince and descendant of Ginghis Khan. Killed by the rebel leader Chang Tsung-yü in Shantung in 1864. Tzŭ Hsi held him in high honour.

(80) Shen Chin, the reformer who was flogged to death at the Board of Punishments by Tzŭ Hsi's command (1898).

(81) Sheng Pao : Manchu General; allowed by Tzŭ Hsi to commit suicide for having disobeyed her orders.

(82) Sun Chia-nai : native of Anhui. Imperial tutor (*vide* biographical notes). Died 1909.

(83) Sung Po-lu : a Censor cashiered by Tzŭ Hsi in 1898. His honours have been restored to him by the Regent.

(84) Sun Yu-wen : native of Chihli, and for some years Grand Councillor. A favourite of Tzŭ Hsi.

(85) T'an Chung-lin : native of Hunan; Viceroy of Canton. Died at Peking in 1900.

(86) T'ang Shao-yi : a Lieutenant of Yüan Shih-k'ai, and Governor of Moukden; now out of office owing to hostility of Lung Yü's party.

(87) T'an Ssŭ-t'ung : one of the reformers executed in 1898; son of a former governor of Hupii.

(88) T'ao Mo : native of Chekiang; Viceroy of Canton, where he died.

(89) Ting Ju-ch'ang : native of Anhui; Admiral in Chinese Navy; committed suicide at Weihaiwei in 1895. (Hsi reputation not so high among Chinese as among foreigners.)

(90) Ting Pao-chen : Governor of Shantung in 1869. He carried out the execution of An Te-hai.

(91) Ts'en Chun-hsüan : native of Kuangsi, and son of the Viceroy, Ts'en Yü-ying; Governor-Elect of Shensi in 1900; a favourite of Tzŭ Hsi, who made him Viceroy of Ssŭch'uan, and subsequently at Canton, whence he suppressed the Kuangsi rebellion; was summoned to Peking and made President of Yu Ch'uan pu in 1907, but Prince Ching and his corrupt followers dreaded his fearless honesty and induced Tzŭ Hsi to remove him.

(92) Tseng Kuo-fan : native of Hunan; suppressed the Taiping rebellion.

(93) Tso Tsung-t'ang : native of Hunan and a distinguished general. Rose to be Grand Secretary and Councillor. Died in 1885.

(94) T'ung-Chih, Emperor : son of Tzŭ Hsi.

(95) Tung Fu-hsiang; originally a Mahomedan bandit; became imperialist General and greatly distinguished himself during the siege of Legations in 1900.

(96) Tzŭ An : Empress Dowager of the East, and daughter of Mu-yang-a.

(97) Tzŭ Hsi : the "holy mother"; Empress Dowager.

(98) Wang Wen-shao : native of Chekiang; sometime Viceroy of Chihli; Grand Councillor and Grand Secretary; died in 1909.

(99) Weng T'ung-ho : native of Kiangsu; Grand Secretary and Councillor; Imperial Tutor. Disliked by Tzŭ Hsi, who degraded him in 1898. Died 1904. All his honours posthumously restored by Regent.

(100) Wen T'i : Censor, dismissed in 1898 by Kuang Hsü; subsequently promoted by Tzŭ Hsi; was Prefect of K'ai-Feng fu when the Court stayed there in November 1901.

(101) Wu K'o-tu : native of Kansu. The Censor who protested, by committing suicide, against Kuang Hsü's accession.

(102) Yang Jui : one of the executed Reformers of 1898.

(103) Yang Shen-hsiu : a Censor; one of Kuang Hsü's party.

(104) Yeh Ming-shen : Viceroy of Canton in 1857; captured by the British and taken to India, where he died. A great scholar.

(105) Yüan Ch'ang : native of Chekiang; decapitated by Tzŭ Hsi in July 1900 for being pro-foreign. Has been canonised by present Regent.

(106) Yüan Shih-k'ai : native of Hunan; Ex-Viceroy of Chihli and Grand Councillor; a great favourite of Tzŭ Hsi. Present Empress Dowager, for reasons not clear, opposes his return to public life.

(107) Yü Hsien : Manchu; massacred the missionaries in Shansi, when Governor in 1900, and lost his head in consequence.

(108) Yü Lu : Viceroy of Chihli in 1900; committed suicide after fall of Tientsin.

I

THE PARENTAGE AND YOUTH OF YEHONALA

THE family of Yehonala, one of the oldest of the Manchu clans, traces its descent in direct line to Prince Yangkunu, whose daughter married (in 1588) Nurhachi, the real founder of Manchu rule in China and the first direct ancestor of the Ta Ching Emperors. Yangkunu was killed at Mukden in 1583, in one of his raids upon the territories which still owed allegiance to the degenerate Chinese sovereign Wan Li. His clan lived and flourished in that region, near the Corean border, which is dominated by the Long White Mountain, the true cradle of the Manchu stock. He and his people seem to have acquired the arts of war, and much lust of conquest, by constantly harassing the rich lands on their ever-shifting borders, those rich lands which to-day seem to be about to pass under the yoke of new invaders. Yangkunu's daughter assumed the title of Empress by right of her husband's conquests, and her son it was who eventually wrested the whole of Manchuria from the Ming Dynasty and reigned under the name of Tien-Ts'ung.

Into this clan, in November 1835, was born Yehonala, whose life was destined to influence countless millions of human beings, Yehonala, who was to be thrice Regent of China and its autocratic ruler for over half a century. Her father, whose name was Hui Cheng, held hereditary rank as Captain in one of the Eight Banner Corps. Considering the advantages of his birth, he was generally accounted unsuccessful by his contemporaries; at the time of his death he had held no higher post than that of an Intendant of Circuit, or Taotai. Holding this rank in the province of Anhui, he died when his daughter was but three years

of age. His widow and family were well cared for by a kinsman named Muyanga, father of her who subsequently became Empress Consort of Hsien-Feng and Co-Regent with Yehonala. From him the children received every advantage of education.

Many unfounded and ridiculous stories have been circulated in recent years attributing to the Empress Dowager humble, and sometimes disgraceful, antecedents. Many of these are nothing more than the fruit of Yellow Journalism, seeking sensational material of the kind which appeals to the iconoclastic instincts of its readers. Others, however, undoubtedly owe their origin to the envy, hatred and malice of Palace intrigues, to the initiative of the Iron-capped Princes and other high officials of the elder branch of the Imperial family, many of whom were addicted to besmirching the family and character of Tzŭ Hsi in order to inflict "loss of face" on the Yehonala clan. In this way, and because mud thrown from above usually sticks, their malicious stories were freely circulated, and often believed, in Peking and in the South: witness the writings of K'ang Yu-wei and his contemporaries.[1]

To cite an instance. One of these mythical stories used to be told, with every appearance of good faith, by Prince Tun, the fifth son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang. This Prince cherished a grudge against Tzŭ Hsi because of his disappointed ambitions: himself adopted out of the direct line of succession, he had nevertheless hoped, in 1875, that his son would have been chosen Emperor. The story, as he used to tell it, was that when the Empress's mother had been left a widow with a large family (including the future ruler of China) they lived in the most abject poverty at the prefectural city of Ningkuo, where her husband had held office and died. Having no funds to pay for her return to Peking, she would have been reduced to beggary had it not been that, by a lucky accident, a sum of money intended for another traveller was delivered on board of her boat at

[1] As an example of unbalanced vituperation, uttered in good faith and with the best intentions, *vide The Chinese Crisis from Within* by "Wen Ching," republished from the *Singapore Free Press* in 1901 (Grant Richards).

a city on the way, and that the traveller, on learning of the mistake and being moved to pity at the sight of the family's destitution, insisted on her keeping the money. Twenty-five years later, when Tzŭ Hsi had become the all-powerful Regent, this official appeared for audience at Peking, when, remembering the benefits received at his hands, the Empress raised him from his knees and expressed her gratitude for his kindness. The story is prettier than many which emanate from the same source, and original, too, in the idea of a Manchu official dying at his provincial post in abject poverty, but unfortunately for the truth of the narrative, it has been established beyond shadow of doubt that neither the wife nor the family of Tzŭ Hsi's father were with him at the time of his death. They had gone on ahead to Peking, in anticipation of his early return thither to take up a new appointment in the White Banner Corps.

Before proceeding further, it may be well to refer briefly to the Yehonala clan and its position in relation to the elder branch of the Imperial family, a question of no small importance, past and future, in its effect on the history of modern China. Jealousy and friction there had always been between the Imperial house and this powerful patrician clan, since the first Yehonala became *de facto* ruler of the Empire after the collapse of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy, but their relations became more markedly strained after the *coup d'état* in 1898, and although the wholesome fear of the Empress Dowager's "divine wrath" prevented any definite cleavage, the possibilities of trouble were ever latent in the Forbidden City. Subsequent events at Peking, and especially the dismissal of the Chihli Viceroy, Tuan Fang, for alleged irreverence at the funeral ceremonies of the Empress Dowager, emphasised the divisions in the Manchu camp and the dangers that beset its Government, once it was bereft of the strong hand of Tzŭ Hsi. It is difficult for foreigners to form any clear idea of the actual conditions of life and of party divisions in the Palace, confused as they are by intricate questions of genealogy, of inter-marriage and adoptions by relatives, of ancient clan feuds. It should, however, be explained that the Imperial Clansmen (known

in their own tongue as Aisin Gioros) divided into the Yellow and Red Girdles, are the descendants respectively of Nurhachi himself and of that ruler's ancestors, by virtue of which ancestry they consider themselves (and the Chinese would recognise the claim) to be the *sang pur* and highest nobility of the Manchu Dynasty. The Yehonala clan, although in no sense of Royal blood (as marriages between the sovereign and female members of a family do not entitle that family to claim more than noble rank) owed its great power not only to its numbers, but to the fact that it has given three Empresses Dowager to the Empire; but, above all, to the great prestige and personal popularity of Tzŭ Hsi. If the events between 1908 and 1911 are to be interpreted in the light of history and of her significant death-bed mandate, the leaders of the Yehonala clan were determined that the widow of Kuang-Hsü should follow in the footsteps of her august aunt, and control the business of the State, at least during the Regency. And, thanks to Tzŭ Hsi's far-seeing statecraft, the young Emperor, a grandson of Jung Lu, was trained from the first to reverence the policy handed down by the Old Buddha.

One long-standing cause of suspicion and dissension between the parties in the Palace arose from the fear of the elder descendants of Tao-Kuang (of whom Prince P'u Lun and Prince Kung are the chief representatives) that the boy-Emperor, or his father the Regent, would elevate the founder of his branch (the first Prince Ch'un) to the posthumous rank of Emperor. This kind of canonisation might seem to Europeans unimportant, but in the eyes of the Chinese it would have constituted a sort of posthumous usurpation on the part of the junior branch of the Imperial clan, since the first Prince Ch'un would thus be placed on a footing of equality with Nurhachi, the founder of the Dynasty, and would practically become the founder of a new line. The first Prince Ch'un had himself foreseen the possibility of such an occurrence, and had realised that it could not fail to lead to serious trouble, for which reason, as will be seen hereafter, he had taken precautions to prevent it. It has not escaped the attention

The Regent, Prince Ch'un, with his two Sons, the Young Emperor (standing) and Prince P'u Chieh.

of those whose business it is to watch the straws that float down the stream of high Chinese policy that, after the accession of the child-Emperor Hsüan T'ung to the Throne, the ancestral sacrifices made at the mausoleum of the first Prince Ch'un became greatly elaborated in pomp and circumstance, while in official documents his name was given "double elevation," that is to say, in the eyes of the *literati* he was made to rank on the same level as a reigning Emperor. It was commonly believed by Chinese in a position to speak with authority on the subject, that when the Emperor attained his majority, he would be led to confer further posthumous honours upon his grandfather, including that of "triple elevation," which would place him on a footing of equality with a deceased Emperor, and entitle him to worship at a special shrine in the Temple of the Ancestors of the Dynasty. From a Chinese constitutional point of view, the consequences of such a step would have been extremely serious and difficult of adjustment.

The Old Buddha was a strong partisan, and during her lifetime her immediate kinsmen were practically above the law, basking in the sunshine of her protection or making hay thereby, so that there was always a strong undercurrent of friction between them and the Yellow and Red Girdles, friction of which echoes frequently reached the tea-houses and market places of the capital. Tzŭ Hsi delighted to snub the Aisin Gioros; in one Decree she forbade them to reside in the business quarter of the city, on the ground that she had heard it said that some of them were making money by disreputable trades. She was by no means beloved of the Iron-capped princes and other noble descendants of Nurhachi, who, while they feared her, never ceased to complain that she curtailed their time-honoured privileges.

An interesting example of her masterful methods of dealing with these hereditary aristocrats occurred when one of the Imperial Dukes ventured to build himself a pretentious house in the immediate vicinity of the Imperial City, and overlooking a considerable portion of the Palace enclosure. No sooner was the building completed than the

Old Buddha confiscated it, reprimanding the owner for his lack of decorum in daring to overlook the Palace grounds, and forthwith she bestowed it upon her younger brother, the Duke Chao.

Another example of her clannishness, and of the difficulties which it created for the local authorities, occurred upon the establishment of the new Police Board at Peking, three years after the return of the Court from exile in 1902. The Grand Councillor, Hsü Shih-ch'ang, a Chinese by birth, and a favourite of Her Majesty, was placed at the head of this new Board, but he soon realised that the lot of his policemen, when dealing with the members of the ruling clan, was by no means a happy one. Her Majesty's third brother, the Duke Kuei Hsiang, was a particularly hardened offender, absolutely declining to recognise police regulations of any kind, and inciting his retainers to "gain face" by driving on the wrong side of the road and by committing other breaches of the regulations. On one occasion a zealous policeman went so far as to arrest one of the Duke's servants. Hsü Shih-ch'ang, hearing of the occurrence, promptly ordered the man's release, but the Duke, grievously insulted, insisted upon an abject apology from the head of the Board in person. Thrice did the unfortunate Hsü call at the Duke's palace without gaining admission and it was only after he had performed a "ko-tow" before the Duke in the open courtyard outside the palace that his apology was accepted. An idea of the importance of this incident in the eyes of the Pekinese, and of the power of the clansmen, may be inferred from the fact that Hsü subsequently became Viceroy of the Manchurian provinces, later President of the Ministry of Posts and Communications, and in August, 1910, was elevated to the Grand Council. On this occasion, however, the Old Buddha, learning of the incident, "excused" Hsu from further attendance at the Grand Council, and shortly afterwards he was transferred to Mukden.

Yehonala's mother, the lady Niuhulu, survived her husband for many years, residing in his house in "Pewter Lane" (Hsi-la-hu-t'ung), quite close to the Legation

quarter. When her daughter became Empress Mother, she received the rank of Imperial Duchess. She appears to have been a lady of great ability and good sense, distinguished even amongst the members of a clan always noted for the intelligence of its women kind. After living to a ripe old age, she was buried beside her husband in the family graveyard which lies without the city to the west, in the vicinity of the Europeans' race-course, where her daughter's filial piety was displayed by the erection of an honorific arch and the customary marble tablets. When, in January 1902, the Empress Dowager returned from exile by railway from Cheng-ting fu, she gained great kudos from the orthodox by declining to enter the capital by the Hankow railway line, because that line ran close to her parents' graves, and it would have been a serious breach of respect to their memory to pass the spot without reverently alighting to make obeisance. She therefore changed her route, entering Peking from the south, to the great admiration of all her people.

Of Yehonala's childhood there is little to record except that among her youthful playmates was a kinsman, Jung Lu, who in after years was to play so prominent a part in many a crisis of her career. By common report she had been betrothed to him from birth. This report is not verifiable, but there is no doubt that the great influence which Jung Lu exercised over her, far greater than that of any of her family or highest officials, was founded in their early youth. K'ang Yu-wei and other Chinese officials opposed to the Manchu rule have not hesitated to assert that he was on terms of improper intimacy with her for years, dating from the flight to Jehol, and before the decease of her husband the Emperor.

Yehonala's education followed the usual classical course, but the exceptional alertness and activity of her mind, combined with her inordinate ambition and love of power, enabled her to rise superior to its usually petrifying influences and to turn her studies to practical account in the world of living men. She learned to paint skilfully and to take real pleasure in the art; she was an adept at the

composition of verses, as classically wooden in form as anything produced by the most distinguished of English public schools. At the age of sixteen she had mastered the Five Classics in Chinese and Manchu, and had studied to good purpose the historical records of the twenty-four Dynasties. She had beyond doubt that love of knowledge which is the beginning of wisdom, and the secret of power, and she had, moreover, the chroniclers aver, a definite presentiment of the greatness of her destiny.

Upon the death of the Emperor Tao-Kuang in 1850, his eldest surviving son, aged nineteen, ascended the Throne under the reign-title of Hsien-Feng. After the expiry of the period of mourning (twenty-seven months) during which the new Emperor may not marry, a Decree was issued commanding that all beautiful Manchu maidens of eligible age should present themselves at the Imperial Household Office which would make from them a selection for the Emperor's harem. Prior to his accession, Hsien-Feng had married the eldest daughter of Muyanga, but she had died before his coming to the Throne. Among the maidens who obeyed the nuptial Edict were Muyanga's second daughter, Sakota, and the young Yehonala. On the 14th of June, 1852, about sixty of the beauty and fashion of the Manchu aristocracy appeared before the critical eye of the widow of Tao-Kuang, who selected twenty-eight from among them, and these she divided into the four classes of Imperial concubines, viz., "Fei," "P'in," "Kuei Jen," and "Ch'ang Tsai." Sakota thus became a "P'in," and Yehonala a "Kuei Jen" or "honourable person." With rare exceptions, these Imperial concubines are much more the servants of their mother-in-law than the wives of their sovereign. In theory, their number is limited to seventy, but this number is seldom maintained; beside them, there are within the Palace precincts some two thousand female Manchus, employed as handmaidens and general servants under the direction of the eunuchs. In all domestic matters of the household, the widow of the Emperor last deceased exercises supreme authority, and although precedent allows the Emperor to inspect the

ladies selected, he has no voice in their disposition or the determination of their rank.

Thus Yehonala left her home in Pewter Lane to become an inmate of the Forbidden City, cut off henceforth from all direct intercourse with her own people. An aged tiring woman who served her from the time of her first entry into the Palace until her death, is our authority for the following interesting description of the only visit which she ever paid to her family. It was in January 1857, nine months after the birth of her son, the heir to the Throne, that, by special permission of the Emperor, she was allowed to leave the Palace. Early in the morning, eunuchs were sent to announce to her mother that her daughter, the Concubine Yi, was coming to visit her at mid-day. There was much joyful excitement amongst the family and its friends at this rare honour. All the neighbours in Pewter Lane turned out to see the eunuchs and the yellow-draped chair. The mother and all the members of the household (including some of an elder generation) ranged themselves on either side of the entrance courtyard as the chair was borne within. At the head of the steps leading to the inner courtyard the eunuchs in attendance requested her to descend; she then entered the main room, where she took the seat of honour. Her family approached respectfully to salute her, all kneeling except her mother and the elder relatives. A banquet was then served at which, by special arrangement, the mother took a seat lower than that of the daughter, thus recognising her position as mother of the Heir Apparent. All present were most favourably impressed by Yehonala's unaffected and affectionate disposition; she seemed quite unspoiled by the formalities and splendours of Court life, talking with all the old vivacity as a daughter of the house, showing the keenest interest in the family's affairs, and particularly in the education of her sisters.

The banquet lasted till late in the afternoon, Yehonala asking and answering innumerable questions. As the short January day drew to its close, the eunuchs requested her to prepare to return to the Palace. She therefore took

an affectionate farewell of her family, expressing sincere regret that her life must be cut off from theirs, but hoping that some day the Emperor might again permit her to visit them. Her mother, she said, would, in any case, be allowed to come and see her in the Palace. After distributing presents to all the members of her family, she entered her palanquin and was borne away. She never saw her home again, but in later years her mother used frequently to visit her in the Forbidden City.

Upon entering the Palace, Yehonala proceeded to establish herself firmly and speedily in the good graces of Tao-Kuang's widow; through her influence at first, and later by virtue of her own charm, she soon became first favourite with her weak and dissolute lord; and when, in April 1856, she crowned his long disappointed ambitions by presenting him with an heir to the Throne, her position was competely assured. At the time of her entering the Palace, the Taiping rebellion was causing great uneasiness at the capital. In March 1853, the rebels took Nanking, the southern capital. Yehonala, who had already made it her business to read, and advise on, all Memorials from the provinces, used her growing influence with the Son of Heaven to secure the appointment of Tseng Kuo-fan as Commander-in-Chief, and to provide him with funds for the raising of train-bands in Hunan, with which, and with the help of General Gordon, Tseng eventually suppressed the rebellion. Thus early she showed her superiority to environment and the fetters of tradition, displaying at a moment of national danger that breadth of mind and quick decision which distinguished her. By all official precedent, Tseng Kuo-fan was not available for service, being in mourning for his mother, but it was ever Yehonala's opinion that precedents were meant to be subordinate to the State and not the State to precedents, wherein lies the mark of the born ruler.

In August 1855 the widow of Tao-Kuang died and Yehonala, in recognition "of her dutiful ministrations," was raised to the rank of "P'in," her colleague Sakota having in the meanwhile become Empress Consort.

It was the common belief of Chinese writers at this time that the reign of Hsien-Feng would witness the end of the Dynasty, which was held to have "exhausted the mandate of Heaven." All over the Empire rebellion was rife; the sovereign himself was a weak debauchee, incapable of inspiring either loyalty or affection in his people. In the eyes of the *literati* he was a degenerate, having none of the scholarly tastes which had made his five predecessors famous in history, nor any disposition to follow their example in the compiling of monumental editions of the classics and dictionaries, which have endeared their memory to scholars. It was, moreover, considered ominous that no heir had yet been born to him, though he was now twenty-five, several of his predecessors having provided for the succession before they were fifteen. When, therefore, in April 1856, Yehonala gave birth to a son, and at the same time the rebels were driven from the provinces of Hunan and Kiangsi, it was felt that the tide of evil had turned and that Heaven's favour once more smiled upon the Throne.

At this period, the health of the Emperor, stricken with paralysis, had completely broken down and Yehonala, by virtue of her position as mother of the Heir Apparent, and even more by reason of her masterful character, became the real ruler of the Empire. Her colleague, the Empress Consort, took little or no active interest in the business of government. In actual rank, Yehonala had risen to the position of a concubine of the first grade "Fei" and was generally known in the metropolis as the "Kuei Fei, Yi," the last word being her honorific title, meaning "feminine virtue."

Her advice on foreign affairs at this period was generally of an aggressive character, and the fact is not matter for wonder when we bear in mind her youth, her pride of race and her complete ignorance of foreign countries and their resources. On the return of the special Envoy Ch'i Ying, who had been sent to endeavour to induce Lord Elgin to leave Taku and whose mission had ignominiously failed, it was to the haughty Yehonala that common report

credited the Decree which ordered him to be presented with the "silken cord" of self-despatch, as a mark of "the Throne's benevolent leniency." To her also was ascribed the Emperor's refusal to permit the High Commissioner Yeh at Canton to negotiate with the British on trade questions, a decision which led directly to the capture of that city by the foreign barbarian in the following year. In the records left by chroniclers and diarists of that time it is generally noticeable that the Emperor's opinions and doings are ignored and that all the business of the Imperial City and the Empire had come to depend on the word of Yehonala, a fact in itself sufficiently remarkable in a country where no woman is supposed to rule, and particularly remarkable when we bear in mind that she was at this time only a concubine and twenty-two years of age.

To prevent confusion arising from the several names and titles of the Empress Dowager, it should be explained that her family or clan name of Yehonala was that by which she was known to the world of Peking before and at the time of her selection for the Imperial harem. In the Palace, until her accession to the rank of Empress Mother (Empress of the West), she was still Yehonala, but more usually described as the "Yi" concubine. As co-Regent and Empress Mother, her official designation, Imperially decreed, was Tzŭ Hsi, to which many other honorifics were added. To the mass of the people she was either the Empress Dowager (*Huang T'ai Hou*) or the Old Buddha, and towards the end of her reign this last affectionately respectful title was universally used in the North.

II

THE FLIGHT TO JEHOL

THE causes and history of the invasion of North China by the allied forces of England and France are too well known to need re-stating here, but the part played by Yehonala in the stirring days which preceded and followed the flight to Jehol are not familiar to European readers. Most interesting details are given on this subject by a certain Doctor of Letters and member of the Hanlin Academy, whose diary was printed privately in narrative form several years later, and from this document the following extracts are taken. It was originally entitled "A Record of Grief Incurable" and, as will be noted, it is primarily a monument of filial piety, into which the doings of the barbarians, and the already dominant personality of Yehonala, are artlessly interwoven, with a certain quality of sincerity that attracts. The narrative itself is full of human interest.

"In the 7th Moon of the 'Keng Shen' year (August 1860), five or six days after my mother fell sick, rumours began to circulate that the barbarians had already reached Taku. It was generally known that many Memorials had reached the Throne from the metropolitan and provincial officials, but as no mention of them had appeared in the Gazette, it was only natural that there should be a very widespread feeling of uneasiness and many alarming rumours. So far, however, there had been no fleeing from the city. His Majesty was seriously ill, and it was known that he wished to leave for the north, but the Imperial Concubine Yi and Prince Seng dissuaded him from this and assured him that the barbarians would never enter the city.

"At this time my mother was suffering from dysentery, but she ordered the servants to keep it from me. It was only one day, when I noticed a prescription lying on her table, that I realised that she was indeed seriously ill. Doctor Liu was in attendance, as usual, but I never had any con-

fidence in him or his methods, which seemed to me far too drastic. Nevertheless he had advised and attended her for seven years, and my mother and all her household placed implicit confidence in him. Alas, the Ancients have rightly said that a good son should know something of the principles of medicine, and surely my ignorance has been the first cause of my mother's death. Though I should give up my life a hundred times, how can I ever atone for this?

"During the next few days, people began to leave Peking, for the report was spread that our troops had been defeated at Taku, and that a Brigadier General was among the slain; the garrison had fled from Pei T'ang and the forts were in the hands of the barbarians. Prince Seng had been ordered by Edict not to fight a pitched battle, so that our forces were idly confronting the enemy. Nothing definite was known as to the real cause of our defeat, and the people, being kept in ignorance, gradually got over their first alarm.

"On the 13th of the 7th Moon, I noticed a change for the worse in my mother's condition, and straightway applied for ten days' leave of absence from my official duties. I kept her ignorant of the political situation and urged her to abstain from worry of every kind. But every day the news was worse, and people began to leave the city in thousands.

"On the following day, Magistrate Li Min-chai looked in to say good-bye, as he was leaving to join the troops in Anhui. He expressed strong disapproval of Dr. Liu's prescription and gave me one of his own. My mother was averse to taking his medicine, but I persuaded her to do so. In the night she was suddenly seized with shortness of breath, and hastily I sent for Mr. Li, who assured me that this was in no way due to his medicine. My mother, however, insisted upon returning to Dr. Liu's prescription, so all I could do was to urge him to compound it of drugs less strong and more suited to a patient of my mother's advanced years.

"My mother then bade me to prepare her coffin as she was certain that her death was near. Fortunately I had bought the wood eight years before at Mukden, and had stored it in a coffin shop in Peking, whence I now had it fetched. We set carpenters to work in our courtyard, and by the 20th, the coffin was finished. The wood was beautifully thick, and the whole appearance of the coffin most creditable. Never could I have expected that at such a time of haste and general disorder so perfect a piece of work could have been produced. The carpenters assured me that at the present time such a coffin would cost at least a thousand taels in Peking.[1] This comforted me not a little.

[1] About £120.

"Next morning the lacquer shop people sent over to put on the first coating of lacquer, in which at least two pounds were used. We then sent for the tailor and six assistants to make the grave clothes and purchased the materials for my mother's ceremonial 'going away dress.' I had a long sable robe made up, but next day, as my mother appeared to be slightly better, I decided to postpone having the long outer robes prepared. Rumours were now rife that the barbarians had already reached Tungchou, and were going to bombard Peking on the 27th, so that everyone was escaping who could leave the city. On the 27th, we put on the second coating of lacquer.

"On that day, our troops captured the barbarian leader Pa Hsia-li (Parkes) together with eight others, who were imprisoned in the Board of Punishments. Thereupon the whole city was in an uproar, and it became known that His Majesty was preparing to leave on a tour northwards. But the Concubine Yi persuaded some of the older officials to memorialise, urging him to remain, none of which Memorials have been published. All the Manchu and Chinese officials were now sending their families away and their valuables, but the large shops outside the main gate were doing business as usual. My mother's condition remained much the same, and I applied for another ten days' leave.

"On the 1st of the 8th Moon, we applied another coating of lacquer to the coffin. On the same day Dr. Liu changed my mother's medicine, but the dysentery continued unabated.

"On the 4th my mother called me to her bedside and said: 'I cannot possibly recover. See that all is prepared for the burial. I shall take no food to-day.' I felt as if a knife had been thrust into my vitals, and sent straightway for the tailor to hurry on with the ceremonial robes. My friend, P'an Yu-shih, called and recommended a purgative, but my mother was very angry, and refused point-blank to take it. In the night she had a violent attack of vomiting, which seemed to relieve her—so much so, that I told the tailor not to be in too great a hurry. Next morning the robes were finished, but my mother thought the coverlet too heavy, and I substituted therefor a lighter material, silk. To this she objected as being too luxurious and more expensive than she had any right to expect; she observed that her parents-in-law had not had grave-wrappings of such valuable stuff. Meanwhile the confusion in Peking was hourly increasing, and huge crowds were hurrying from the city. Most of the city gates were closed for fear of the barbarians, but the Chang Yi gate in the southern city was still open.

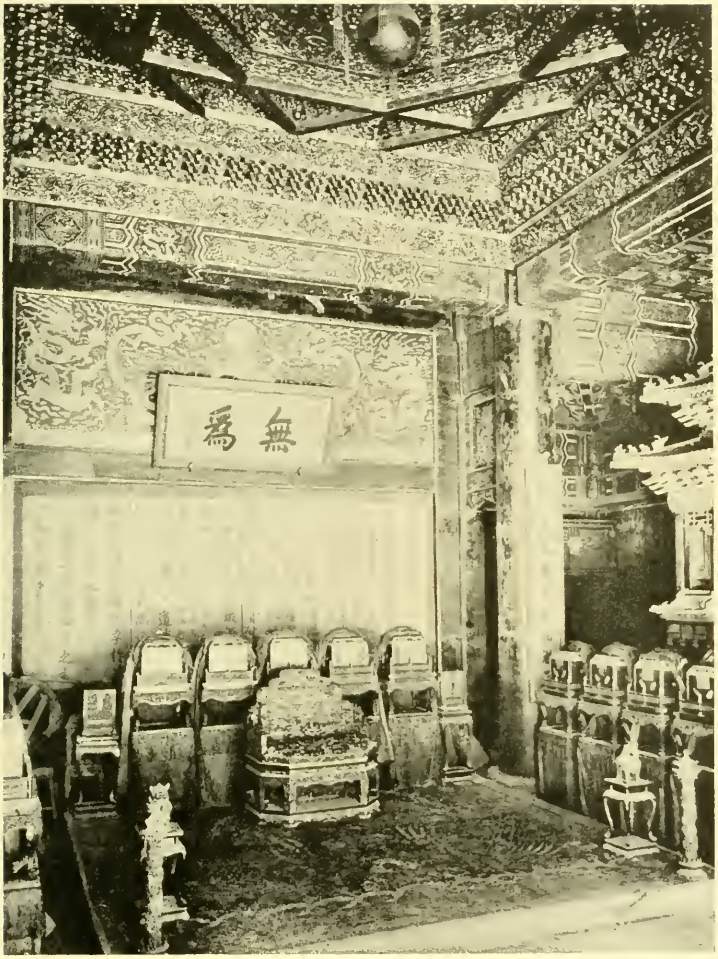
"On the 7th, our troops engaged the barbarians outside the Ch'i Hua gate. The van was composed of untrained Mongol

cavalry, who had never been in action. No sooner had the barbarians opened fire than they turned as one man, broke their ranks and stampeded upon the infantry in their rear. Many were trampled to death, and a general rout followed, our men fleeing in every direction and the barbarians pressing on to the city walls.

"Certain Princes and Ministers besought the Concubine Yi to induce the Emperor to leave on a tour. His Majesty was only too anxious to start at once, but the Concubine Yi persuaded two of the Grand Secretaries to memorialise against his doing so, and in response to this a Decree was issued stating that under no cirumstances would the Emperor leave his capital. Another Decree was put out by the Concubine Yi offering large rewards to any who should slay the barbarians. It was generally thought that the Emperor would now forgo his intended departure.

"Early next morning we heard the news of another engagement outside the Ch'i Hua gate, upon which news His Sacred Majesty, attended by all his concubines, the Princes, Ministers and Dukes, and all the officers of the Household, left the city in a desperate rout and disorder unspeakable, affording a spectacle that gave the impression that hordes of barbarians were already in close pursuit. As a matter of fact, the foreigners were still at a considerable distance, and at the Summer Palace, where the Court lay, there was nothing whatsoever to cause the slightest apprehension. I cannot understand why His Majesty was allowed to leave; up to the very last the Yi Concubine begged him to remain in his Palace, as his presence there could not fail to awe the barbarians, and thus to exercise a protecting influence for the good of the city and people. How, said she, could the barbarians be expected to spare the city if the Sacred Chariot had fled, leaving unprotected the tutelary shrines and the altars of the gods? She begged him to bear in mind that episode in the Chou Dynasty, when the Son of Heaven fled his capital, 'his head covered with dust,' and was forced to take refuge with one of his feudatory Princes. The Chinese people have always regarded this as a humiliating event in the history of their country, but the present flight of the Court appears more humiliating still.

"Meantime my mother's condition was becoming critical, and I had scant leisure for considering the political situation. Every official of any standing had either left the capital by this time or was leaving, and all the merchants who could afford it were sending their families away. The cost of transport was prohibitive for many; the price of a cart with one mule to go to Cho-chou was twenty taels, and to Pao-ting fu (60 miles) they charged thirty taels. In my case there could be no question of removing my mother, and there



Photo, Ogawa, Tokio.

THE IMPERIAL DAIS IN THE CHIAO-T'AI HALL.

was nothing for it therefore but to sit still and face the situation.

"As the dysentery grew more acute every day, with Dr. Liu's permission I tried Dr. Yang's prescription. It was, however, too late, and nothing could help her now. On the morning of the 12th she was *in extremis,* and had lost the power of swallowing; so we sent for Li, the tailor, to put a few finishing touches on the burial robes, and to prepare the 'cockcrow pillow' and coverlets. At 11 p.m. she passed away, abandoning her most undutiful son. Alas, there is no doubt that her death lies at my door, because of my ignorance of medicine. Smiting my body against the ground, I invoke Heaven, but ten thousand separate deaths could not atone for my sins.

"We arrayed her, then, in her robes. First her hand-maiden put on the inner garments, a chemise of white silk, then a jacket of grey silk, and outside that a wadded robe of blue satin. Then were put on the robe and mantle of State, with the badge of her official rank, the jade girdle and necklace of amber. After the gold hair ornaments had been placed in position, the Phœnix hat was set upon her head; red mattresses were laid upon the couch, and we placed her in a comfortable position, with her head reclining on the 'cock-crow' pillow of red satin. Not a friend came near us, and every door in the neighbourhood was closed. Next morning I lined the coffin with red satin, and then padded it with straw to prevent it shaking, and at 3 p.m. I invited my mother to ascend into her 'long home.'

"The city was in a terrible tumult, and a friend came in to advise me to bury my mother temporarily in a temple outside the city. It would not be safe, he said, to inter her in the courtyard of this house, for the barbarian is suspicious by nature, and will assuredly search every house in Peking as soon as the city is taken. It was impossible for me to consider calmly what might happen if they were to find and to desecrate my mother's coffin. I remembered what has been told of their doings in Canton under similar circumstances.

"On the 14th, the Chang Yi gate was opened, and I found a temple, suitably situated, which the priest was willing to allow me to rent. I prepared therefore to watch over my mother's remains, sending my family in the meanwhile to live with an old pupil of mine at Pa-chou. Only the two western gates of the Chinese city were still open, and as the Hata Men and the Ch'ien Men had been closed for four days, the stream of traffic through the Shun Chih Men caused perpetual blocks in that gateway. All the small pedlars, hawkers and barbers were fleeing the city, but still the large business houses remained open.

"On the 19th I conveyed my mother's remains to the temple; I found all quiet there, but my progress through the city gate was very slow because of the crowd. On the 23rd there were but few people abroad, and these clustering together in small groups and speaking in low voices. Suddenly, a little after mid-day, an immense blaze was seen to the north-west, and speedily it was reported that the barbarians had seized Hai-tien and the Summer Palace. Our army is said to number half a million men, and yet it seems that not one of them dare oppose the barbarians' advance. They have about a thousand of cavalry, yet they move about at will in our midst as if in an uninhabited wilderness! 'Tis passing strange! The troops of Prince Seng and General Sheng have retreated to the Te Sheng gate.

"On the 24th all the shops were closed, and the higher the price of vehicles, the greater the number of people to wish to engage them. The poorer class were using wheelbarrows, on which they packed their most valuable moveables for flight.

"Prince Kung sent an Envoy to the barbarians' camp with a despatch asking for an armistice. On arriving in the vicinity of the camp, however, the messenger saw the barbarians pointing rifles at him, so that he turned and fled.

"On the afternoon of the 24th, vast columns of smoke were seen rising to the north-west, and it was ascertained that the barbarians had entered the Summer Palace, and after plundering the three main halls, leaving them absolutely bare, they had set fire to the buildings. Their excuse for this abominable behaviour is that their troops got out of hand, and had committed the incendiarism. After this they issued notices, placarded everywhere, in very bad Chinese, stating that unless terms of peace had been arranged before mid-day on the 29th, they would then bombard Peking, in which case all inhabitants who did not wish to share the fate of the city had better remove themselves to a safe distance.

"On this day it was reported that The Sacred Chariot had reached Jehol in safety, but His Majesty had been greatly alarmed, and had issued a Decree expressing regret for his failure to commit suicide on the approach of the invaders. The Emperor is reported to be ill, and it is said that the Princes Tsai Yüan and Tuan Hua are trying to get themselves appointed to the Grand Council. Should the Emperor die (*lit.* 'when ten thousand years have passed') the Yi concubine will be made Empress Dowager, but at present she is reported to be at variance with the Princes, who are endeavouring to prejudice the Emperor against her.

"I learnt that all was quiet at the temple where my mother's coffin rests. Troops were passing there daily, but,

so far, none had occupied it. On the 29th, my servant-boy, Yung 'Erh, came to tell me that troops from Tientsin in the pay of the barbarians had occupied the temple, but on proceeding thither I found them to be General Sheng's men. Prince Seng's troops were also near at hand, so that, if a bombardment had taken place, what could have prevented the destruction of the temple, and what would then have become of my mother's remains? I therefore decided to engage wheelbarrows and handcarts, at six taels apiece, to take my family to Pao-ting fu, and I arranged with the undertakers to hire bearers for the coffin.

"At 11 a.m. of the same day the barbarians entered the city by the Anting gate, occupying its tower and the wall adjoining. One large cannon and four small ones were placed in position on the wall, and a five-coloured flag hoisted there. With the exception of the officials entrusted with the duty of negotiating, not one remained in the city. Two days ago the prisoner Parkes, and his companions, were sent back to the enemy with every mark of courtesy. Scarcely had they reached their camp when a special Decree, post-haste from Jehol, ordered Prince Kung to decapitate them all forthwith as a warning to the bandits who had dared to invade the sacred precincts of the Palace. As the Yi concubine had urged their execution from the very first, it would seem as if her influence were again in the ascendant.

"On the 1st of the 9th Moon, the Chang Yi gate was closed, but I managed to leave the city by the Hsi Pien Mên, where I was nearly crushed to death in the enormous crowd. Upon my arrival at the temple, I had a nice wadded cover made to put over the coffin, and then hurried back to the city to arrange for the cortège leaving next morning. The President of the Board of Finance, Liang Hai-lou, was hiding in the temple precincts with his family and chief concubine, all wearing common clothes and unshaven. This is a good example of the condition to which the very highest had been reduced.

"Next morning, on reaching the temple, I found the coffin-bearers and transport coolies on the spot. But, unfortunately, in my hurry, I failed to notice that the undertakers had supplied the frame, on which the coffin is carried, of a size smaller than had been agreed upon, so that instead of sixteen bearers there were but eight. We started, however, and the procession's appearance of panic-stricken fugitives was most distressing to contemplate. But what could I do? The first and only object in my mind was to protect my mother's coffin. I have omitted to state that my small servant-boy, Yung 'Erh, had started to accompany the coffin on foot. But, after they had started, it occurred to me that the lad could never stand so long

a journey, and that should my mother be aware of it, she would be extremely anxious about him. Therefore, I quickly engaged another wheelbarrow for Yung 'Erh, and bade the coolies hurry after the procession.

"On returning home I felt uneasy about the jolting which my mother's coffin must have experienced on the undersized frame. I went, therefore, to the undertakers and expostulated with them for having cheated me. After much altercation they agreed to change the frame, but I was to pay two taels more for the larger size. I subsequently learned that they failed to keep their promise, but there was no good to be got by suing them for breach of faith. They are sordid tricksters. Yung 'Erh wrote, however, to assure me that the party had reached Pao-ting fu in safety, and that the coffin had not been jolted in the least. On removing the wrappings the lacquer was found to be undamaged.

"The barbarians were now in full possession of the city, and rumours were rife on all sides. Everyone in Peking—there were still a good many people—was terrified, and the Manchus were sending their families from the Tartar to the southern (Chinese) city to save their women from being outraged by the barbarian bandits. The condition of the people was indeed deplorable in the extreme. One of the Censors had sent a Memorial to Jehol, reproaching the Emperor for the pass to which he had brought his people, and for the neglect of ancestral worship caused by his absence. He blamed His Majesty for listening to evil advisers, and besought him to return to his capital.

"The minds of the people were becoming more than ever disturbed, because it was now reported that the negotiations for peace had so far failed, either because Prince Kung would not entertain the barbarians' conditions, or because the latter were too utterly preposterous.

"On the 6th, a despatch arrived from the British barbarians, accusing China of having violated all civilised usage in torturing to death their fellow-countrymen. For this they demanded an indemnity of 500,000 taels. At the same time came a despatch from the Russian barbarians, saying that they had heard that England was demanding this indemnity, but they (the Russians) were prepared to use their influence and good offices to persuade the British to abate their claims. Prince Kung was of opinion that, even if they should be successful in this proposed mediation, China would only save some 100,000 taels, and for this she would place herself under heavy obligations to Russia. So he replied, declining the offer on the ground that the British claim had already been accepted by China, and that further discussion of the matter was therefore impossible. Thereupon the Russians wrote again, saying that

if China had definitely accepted the British terms there was, of course, nothing more to be said, but they asked Prince Kung to note that they had induced England to forgo half of the indemnity of two million taels originally asked, as a set-off to China for the destruction of the Summer Palace. On the 9th, Prince Kung forwarded the 500,000 taels to the British barbarians.

"The whole sixteen articles of the barbarians' demands have finally been accepted without modification. The only thing that our negotiators asked was the immediate withdrawal of the invading army, and to obtain this they were prepared to yield everything. Therefore, the barbarians openly flout China for her lack of men. Woe is me; a pitiful tale, and one hard to tell! When the Yi concubine heard of Prince Kung's complete surrender to the barbarians she reproached the Emperor for allowing his brother to negotiate, and she implored him to re-open hostilities. But His Majesty was dangerously ill, and refused to leave Jehol, so that our revenge must be postponed for the time being."

Bearing in mind the frequent allusions made by the Hanlin diarist to the Emperor's indecision of purpose at the time of the advance of the British and French armies on Peking, it is reasonable to assume that Yehonala prompted, if she did not write, the following vigorous Edict, which appeared on the 3rd day of the 8th Moon in the 10th year of Hsien-Feng (6th September 1860):—

"Swaying the wide world, we are nevertheless animated by one and the same instinct of benevolence to all. We have never forbidden England and France to trade with China, and for long years there has been peace between them and us. But three years ago the English, for no good cause, invaded our city of Canton, and carried off our officials into captivity. We refrained at that time from taking any retaliatory measures, because we were compelled to recognise that the obstinacy of the Viceroy Yeh had been in some measure a cause of the hostilities. Two years ago the barbarian Commander Elgin came north, and we then commanded the Viceroy of Chihli, T'an Ting-hsiang, to look into matters preparatory to negotiations. But the barbarian took advantage of our unreadiness, attacking the Taku forts and pressing on to Tientsin. Being anxious to spare our people the horrors of war, we again refrained from retaliation and ordered Kuei Liang to discuss terms of peace. Notwithstanding the outrageous nature of the barbarians' demands, we subsequently ordered Kuei Liang to proceed to Shanghai in connection with the proposed Treaty

of Commerce, and even permitted its ratification as earnest of our good faith.

"In spite of all this the barbarian leader Bruce again displayed intractability of the most unreasonable kind and once more appeared off Taku with a squadron of warships in the 8th Moon. Seng Ko Lin Ch'in thereupon attacked him fiercely and compelled him to make a hasty retreat. From all these facts it is clear that China has committed no breach of faith and that the barbarians have been in the wrong. During the present year the barbarian leaders Elgin and Gros have again appeared off our coasts, but China, unwilling to resort to extreme measures, agreed to their landing and permitted them to come to Peking for the ratification of the Treaty.

"Who could have believed that all this time these barbarians have been darkly plotting and that they had brought with them an army of soldiers and artillery, with which they attacked the Taku forts from the rear, and, having driven out our forces, advanced upon Tientsin! Once more we ordered Kuei Liang to go to Tientsin and endeavour to reason with them, in the hope that they might not be lost to all sense of propriety, and with the full intention that their demands, if not utterly unreasonable, should be conceded. To our utter astonishment, Elgin and his colleague had the audacity to demand an indemnity from China; they asked, too, that more Treaty ports should be opened, and that they should be allowed to occupy our capital with their army. To such lengths did their brutality and cunning lead them! But we then commanded Prince Yi and Mu Yin, the President of the Board of War, to endeavour to induce in them a more reasonable spirit and to come to some satisfactory arrangement. But these treacherous barbarians dared to advance their savage soldiery towards Tungchou and to announce their intention of compelling us to receive them in audience.

"Any further forbearance on our part would be a dereliction of our duty to the Empire, so that we have now commanded our armies to attack them with all possible energy and we have directed the local gentry to organise train-bands, and with them either to join in the attack or to block the barbarians' advance. Hereby we make offer of the following rewards:— For the head of a black barbarian, 50 taels, and for the head of a white barbarian, 100 taels. For the capture of a barbarian leader, alive or dead, 500 taels, and for the seizure or destruction of a barbarian vessel, 5,000 taels. The inhabitants of Tientsin are reputed brave. Let them now come forward and rid us of these pestilential savages, either by open attack or by artifice. We are no lovers of war, but all our people must admit that this has been forced upon us.

"As to the barbarians' seizure of portions of our territory

in Kuangtung and Fukhien, all our subjects are alike our children and we will issue large rewards to any of them in the south who shall present us with the head of a barbarian chief.

"These barbarians live in the remote parts of the earth, whence they come to China for purposes of trade. Their outrageous proceedings have, we understand, been encouraged by abominable traitors among our own subjects. We now command that all the Treaty ports be closed and all trade with England and France stopped. Subjects of other submissive States are not to be molested, and whensoever the British and French repent them of their evil ways and return to their allegiance, we shall be pleased to permit them to trade again, as of old, so that our clemency may be made manifest. But should they persist in their wicked violation of every right principle, our armies must mightily smite them, and pledge themselves solemnly to destroy utterly these evil-doers. May they repent while yet there is time!"

Three days later Yehonala was present at the morning audience, when the Emperor made the following statement:—

"We learn that the barbarians continue to press upon our capital. Their demands were all complied with, yet they insist upon presenting to us in person their barbarous documents of credentials, and demand that Prince Seng shall withdraw his troops from Chang-Chia wan. Such insolence as this makes further parley impossible. Prince Seng has gained one great victory already, and now his forces are holding the enemy in check at Palich'iao."

Orders were issued that the landing of troops from the warships which had appeared off Kinchou should be stoutly resisted.

On the 7th of the Moon His Majesty sacrificed at the Temple of Confucius, but on the next morning he was afraid to come into the city from the Summer Palace, although he wished to sacrifice to the tutelary deities and inform them of his intended departure. Early on the following day Prince Kung was appointed Plenipotentiary in the place of Prince Yi (Tsai Yüan) and the Emperor, despite the brave wording of his Decree, fled from the capital, after making obeisance to the God of War in a small temple of the Palace grounds. In the Decree

announcing his departure, the flight was described as an "autumn tour of inspection." [1]

The Court started in utter confusion, but proceeded only some eighteen miles on the road northwards from Peking, stopping for the first night in a small temple. Here a Decree was issued calling upon all the Manchurian troops to hasten to Jehol for the protection of the Court. On the evening of the following day a Memorial was received from Prince Kung, reporting on the latest doings of the barbarians, but His Majesty ordered him, in reply, to take whatever steps he might think fit to deal with the situation. It was out of the question, said the Rescript, for the Emperor to decide on any course of action at a distance: in other words, the Throne divested itself of further responsibility.

On the 11th, the Court lay at the Imperial hunting lodge north of Mi-Yün hsien. The Chinese chronicler records that the Emperor was too sick to receive the Grand Council, and delegated his duties to Yehonala, who thereupon issued the following Decree:—

"We are informed that the pestilent barbarians are pressing upon our capital, and our Ministers have asked us to summon reinforcements from the provinces. Now the highest form of military art is to effect sudden surprises, carefully prearranged. The barbarians' superiority lies in their firearms, but if we can only bring them to a hand-to-hand engagement they will be unable to bring their artillery to bear, and thus shall our victory be assured. The Mongol and Manchu horsemen are quite useless for this kind of warfare, but the men of Hupei and Ssŭ-ch'uan are as agile as monkeys and adepts at the use of cover in secret approaches. Let them but surprise these bandits once, and their rout is inevitable. Therefore let Tseng Kuo-fan, the Commander-in-chief of Hukuang forces, send up at least three thousand of his best troops to Peking, and let as many be despatched from Ssŭ-ch'uan. Prince Seng's troops have been defeated again and again, and the capital is in great danger. At such a crisis as this, there must be no delay; it is our earnest hope that a sufficient force will speedily be collected, so that we may be rid of this poisonous fever-cloud. For bravery and good service, there will be great rewards. A most important Decree."

[1] The same euphemism was employed to describe the Court's flight in August 1900.

At the Court's halting place at Pa-Ko shih, close to the Great Wall, a Memorial came in from Prince Seng Ko Lin Ch'in, stating that small scouting parties of the barbarian troops had been seen in the neighbourhood of Peking, but that as yet there had been no general bombardment. A Rescript was issued as follows:—

"Inasmuch as it would appear that the pertinacity of these barbarians will only increase with opposition, it seems desirable to come to terms with them as soon as possible. With reference to the French barbarian Gros's petition to be permitted to discuss matters with Prince Kung in person, at Peking, we command the Prince to receive him. But should the bandits attempt to approach the city in force, Prince Seng should take them in the rear and cut off their retreat. If by any chance, however, Peking should be already taken, let the Mongol regiments be sent up to the Great Wall for the protection of our person."

After a leisurely journey, the Court reached Jehol on the 18th. On the 20th, the opinion of the advisers of the Emperor seemed to be in favour of continuing the war at all costs. A Decree was issued, referring to the fact that the foreign troops had dared to encamp near the Summer Palace, and forbidding Prince Kung to spare the lives of any captured barbarians upon any pretext whatsoever. To this Prince Kung replied stating that the prisoners had already been released and that the Anting gate had been surrendered to the foreigners. Prince Kung, in fact, was statesman enough to realise that the only chance for China lay in submission; he therefore ignored the Imperial Decrees. Before long the Emperor was persuaded to allow negotiations to be resumed, and on the 15th of the 9th Moon he confirmed the Treaty, which had been signed in Peking, in the following Edict:—

"Prince Kung, duly appointed by us to be Plenipotentiary, concluded, on the 11th and 12th days of this Moon, Treaties of Peace with the British and the French. Hereafter amity is to exist between our nations in perpetuity, and the various conditions of the Treaty are to be strictly observed by all."

III

THE TSAI YÜAN CONSPIRACY

It was originally intended that the Emperor Hsien-Feng should return from Jehol to Peking in the spring of 1861, and a Decree was issued to that effect. In January, however, his illness had become so serious that travelling was out of the question, and this Decree was rescinded.

At Jehol, removed from the direct influence of his brothers, and enfeebled by sickness, the Emperor had gradually fallen under the domination of the Prince Yi (Tsai Yüan), with whom were associated, as Grand Councillors, the Prince Tuan Hua and the Imperial Clansman Su Shun. These three, recognising that the Emperor's end was near and that a Regency would be necessary, determined on securing the power for themselves. Prince Yi was nominally the leader of this conspiracy, but its instigator and leading spirit was Su Shun. Tuan Hua, whose family title was Prince Cheng, was the head of one of the eight princely Manchu families, descended in the direct line from Nurhachu's brother. Su Shun was foster-brother to this Prince. In his youth he was a conspicuous figure in the capital, famous for his Mohawk tendencies, a wild blade, addicted to hawking and riotous living. He had originally been recommended to the notice of the Emperor by the two Princes and soon won his way into the dissolute monarch's confidence and goodwill. From a junior post in the Board of Revenue, he rose rapidly, becoming eventually an Assistant Grand Secretary, in which capacity he attained an unenviable reputation for avarice and cruelty. He had made himself hated and feared by persuading the Emperor to order the decapitation of his chief, the Grand Secretary Po Sui,[1] on the pretext that he had shown

[1] Pŭ An, uncle of Na T'ung, head of the Foreign Office till 1911, was executed at the same time for assisting Po Sui in this matter.

favouritism as Chief Examiner for the Metropolitan Degree,—the real reason being that he had offended the two Princes by his uncompromising honesty and blunt speech. It was at this period that he first came into conflict with the young Yehonala, who, dreading the man's growing influence with the Emperor, endeavoured to counteract it, and at the same time to save the life of the Grand Secretary; she failed in the attempt, and Su Shun's position became the stronger for her failure. All those who opposed him were speedily banished or degraded. The Court was terrified, especially when it was realised that Yehonala was out of favour, and Su Shun took care to give them real and frequent cause for alarm. At his instance, all the Secretaries of the Board of Revenue were cashiered on a charge of making illicit profits by cornering the cash market. The charge was possibly well-founded, since such proceedings are part of a Metropolitan official's recognised means of subsistence, but coming from the notoriously corrupt Su Shun, it was purely vindictive, as was shown by his subsequent action; for upon this charge he obtained the arrest of over a hundred notables and rich merchants whom he kept in custody of no gentle kind until they had ransomed themselves with enormous sums. Thus was founded the great fortune which enabled him to conspire with the Princes Yi and Cheng [1] for the supreme power, and which led him eventually to his ruin. To this day, many of his millions lie in the Palace vaults, to which they were carried after his impeachment and death—millions carefully hoarded by Tzŭ Hsi and buried during the Court's flight and exile in 1900.

It was chiefly because of the advice of Su Shun that the Emperor fled his capital at the approach of the Allies, in spite of the urgent appeals of Yehonala and the Grand Council. By his advice also most of the high officials and Metropolitan Ministers were prevented from accompanying the Court, by which means the conspirators were able to exercise steadily increasing influence over the Emperor, and

[1] "Yi" and "Cheng" are honorific names, meaning respectively "harmonious" and "sedate."

to prevent other advice reaching him. It was only the supreme courage and intelligent grasp of the situation shown by Yehonala, that frustrated the conspiracy at its most critical moment. Immediately after the death of the Emperor, and while the plotters were still undecided as to their final plans, she sent an urgent message secretly to Prince Kung which brought him with all speed to Jehol, where, by the help of Jung Lu and other loyal servants, she put into execution the bold plan which defeated the conspiracy and placed her at the head of China's government. On the day when, the game hopelessly lost, the usurping Regents found themselves in Yehonala's hands and heard her order their summary trial by the Court of the Imperial Clan, Su Shun turned to his colleagues and bitterly reproached them. "Had you but taken my advice and slain this woman," he said, "we should not have been in this plight to-day."

To return, however, to the beginning of the conspiracy. At the outset, the object of Prince Yi was to alienate the Emperor from the influence of his favourite concubine, Yehonala. With this object they informed him of the intrigue which, by common report, she was carrying on with the young Officer of the Guards, Jung Lu, then a handsome athletic man of about twenty-five. The Empress Consort they regarded as a negligible factor, whose good-natured and colourless personality took little interest in the politics of the day; but if their plot was to succeed, Yehonala must either be dismissed from the Court for good and all, or, at the very least, she must be temporarily relegated to the "Cold Palace," as is called the place where insubordinate or disgraced concubines are isolated. They knew that, however successful their plans at Jehol, there must always be danger in the event of the Emperor returning to Peking, where access to his person is not possible at all times for officials (even those nearest to the Throne), whereas Yehonala would be in a position, with the help of her eunuchs, to recover his favour and her power. Emphasising, therefore, the alleged misconduct of the young concubine, they quoted the precedent of a certain

Empress Consort of Ch'ien-Lung who, for less grievous disrespect (shown to the Emperor's mother), was imprisoned for life. Thus, by inventions and suggestions, they so worked on the sick man's mind that he finally consented to have Yehonala's infant son, the Heir Apparent, removed from her care, and authorised the child's being handed over to the wife of Prince Yi, who was summoned to the hunting-lodge Palace for that purpose. At the same time, the conspirators thought it well to denounce Prince Kung to the Emperor, his brother, accusing him of treachery, of conniving with the foreigners against the Throne, and of abusing his powers as Plenipotentiary. Prince Yi had been for years Prince Kung's sworn enemy.

The further intentions of the conspirators, instigated by Su Shun, were to massacre all Europeans in the capital and to put to death, or at least imprison for life, the Emperor's brothers. Accordingly they drafted in advance the Decrees necessary to justify and explain these measures, intending to publish them immediately after the Emperor's death, which was now imminent. But here an unforeseen obstacle presented itself, the first of many created for them by the far-seeing intelligence of Yehonala; for they found that she had somehow managed to possess herself of the special seal, which inviolable custom requires to be affixed to the first Edict of a new reign, in proof of validity of succession,—a seal, in the personal custody of the Emperor, which bears the characters meaning "lawfully transmitted authority." Without this seal, any Decrees which the usurpers might issue would lack something of legal finality and, according to Chinese ideas, their subsequent cancellation would be justifiable. But Prince Yi did not feel himself strong enough to risk a crisis by accusing her or taking overt steps to gain possession of it.

Angry with his favourite concubine by reason of the reports of her intimacy with Jung Lu, and his sickness ever increasing, the Emperor lingered on in Jehol all the summer of that year, his duty in the ancestral sacrifices at Peking being taken by Prince Kung. On the 4th of the 6th Moon, the day before his thirtieth birthday, he issued the follow-

ing Decree in reply to a Memorial by the Court of Astronomers, which had announced an auspicious conjunction of the stars for the occasion :—

"Last month the Astronomers announced the appearance of a comet in the north-west, which intimation we received as a solemn warning of the impending wrath of Heaven. Now they memorialise saying that the stars are in favourable conjunction, which is doubtless a true statement, in no way inspired by their desire to please us. But since we came to the Throne, we have steadily refused to pay any attention to auspicious omens, and this with good reason, in view of the ever-increasing rebellions in the south and the generally pitiable condition of our people. May the present auspicious conjunction of the stars portend the dawning of a happier day, and may heaven permit a speedy end to the rebellion. In token of our sincerity, we desire that the Astronomical Court shall refrain from reporting to the Chronicler's Office the present favourable omen for inclusion in the annals of our reign, so that there may be ascribed to us the merit of a devout and sober mind."

On the following morning the Emperor received the congratulations of his Court in a pavilion of the Palace grounds, but Yehonala was excluded from this ceremony. This was His Majesty's last appearance in public; from this date his illness became rapidly worse.

On the 7th of the 7th Moon, Yehonala contrived to despatch a secret courier to Prince Kung at Peking, informing him of the critical condition of his brother and urging him to send with all haste a detachment of the Banner Corps to which the Yehonala clan belonged. Events now moved swiftly. On the 16th, the Grand Councillors and Ministers of the Presence, all adherents of Tsai Yüan's faction, entered the Emperor's bedroom and, after excluding the Empress Consort and the concubines, persuaded the Emperor to sign Decrees appointing Tsai Yüan, Tuan Hua and Su Shun to be Co-Regents upon his decease, with full powers. Yehonala was to be expressly forbidden from exercising any form of control over the Heir Apparent. As the necessary seal of State had been taken by Yehonala and could not be found, these proceedings were irregular. At dawn on the following day the Emperor died, and forthwith appeared the usual valedictory

Decree, prepared in advance by the conspirators, whereby Tsai Yüan was appointed to be Chief Regent, Prince Kung and the Empress Consort being entirely ignored.

In the name of the new Emperor, then a child of five, a Decree was issued, announcing his succession, but it was observed to violate all constitutional precedent in that it omitted the proper laudatory references to the Imperial Consort. On the following day, however, the Regents, fearing to precipitate matters, rectified the omission in an Edict which conferred the rank of Empress Dowager both on the Empress Consort and on Yehonala. The chroniclers aver that the reason for this step lay in the Regents' recognition of Yehonala's undoubted popularity with the troops (all Manchus) at Jehol, an argument that weighed more heavily with them than her rights as mother of the Heir Apparent. They hoped to rid themselves of this condition of affairs after the Court's return to Peking, but dared not risk internal dissensions by having her removed until their positions had been made secure at the capital. That they intended to remove her was subsequently proved; it was evident that their position would never be secure so long as her ambitious and magnetic personality remained a factor of the situation: but it was necessary, in the first instance, to ascertain the effect of the Regency at Peking and in the provinces.

Tsai Yüan's next move was to publish Decrees, in the names of the Joint Regents, by virtue of which they assumed charge of the Heir Apparent and by which the title of "Chien Kuo" (practically equivalent to Dictator) was conferred on the Chief Regent, a title heretofore reserved exclusively for brothers or uncles of the Emperor.

When the news reached Peking, a flood of Memorials burst from the Censorate and high officials. The child Emperor was implored to confer the Regency upon the two Empresses, or, as the Chinese text has it, to "administer the Government with suspended curtain." [1] Prince

[1] The expression has reference to the fact that the Empresses Regent are supposed to be concealed from the sight of Ministers at audience by a curtain suspended in front of the Throne.

Kung and the Emperor's other brothers were at this time in secret correspondence with Yehonala, whom they, like the Censorate, had already recognised as the master-mind of the Forbidden City. They urged her to do all in her power to expedite the departure of the funeral cortège for the capital. To secure this end, it was necessary to proceed with the greatest caution and diplomacy, for several of the late Emperor's wives had been won over to the side of the usurpers, who could also count on a certain number of the Manchu bodyguard, their own clansmen. The influence of Su Shun's great fortune was also no inconsiderable factor in the situation. The man was personally unpopular with the people of Peking, because of his abuse of power and too frequent connection with speculations in bank-note issues and cash, which cost the citizens dear, but his vaults were known to be full to overflowing, and there is no city in the world where money buys more political supporters than in Peking. Su Shun's career has had its counterpart, in everything except its sanguinary dénouement, in the capital to-day.

At the moment the position of the Emperor's family was prejudiced, and the aims of the conspirators assisted, by the political situation. With the capital occupied by foreign troops, and many of the provinces in the throes of a great rebellion, the people might be expected to welcome a change of rulers, and the ripe experience of the usurping Regents in all matters of State was undeniable. But the virile and untiring energies of Yehonala, ably supported by Jung Lu and other faithful followers, soon put a new complexion on affairs, and the situation was further modified in her favour by the success of her nominee, the Commander-in-Chief, Tseng Kuo-fan, in capturing the city of An-ch'ing (in Anhui) from the rebels, a victory that was regarded as of good augury to her cause. Thereafter her courage and diplomacy enabled her to play off one opponent against another, gaining time and friends until the conspirators' chance was gone. Her own aims and ambitions, which had been voiced by her friends in the Censorate, were, however, to some extent impeded by the

Her Majesty Tzŭ Hsi in the Year 1903.

fact that a House-law of the Dynasty forbids the administration of the Government by an Empress Dowager, while there were quite recent precedents for a Regency by a Board, in the cases of the Emperors Shun-Chih and K'ang-Hsi. In neither of these instances had the Empress Tai-Tsung had any voice in the Government. The precedent for Boards of official Regents had, however, come to be recognised as inauspicious, because the several Regents of K'ang-Hsi's minority had either been banished or compelled to commit suicide. It is probable, too, that Prince Kung, in instigating and supporting the claims of the Empresses, failed to appreciate Yehonala's strength of character, and believed that a woman's Regency would leave the supreme power in his own hands.

A Manchu, who accompanied the flight to Jehol, describing his experiences, lays stress upon Yehonala's unfailing courage and personal charm of manner, to which was due her popularity with the Imperial Guards and her eventual triumph. At the most critical period of the conspiracy she was careful to avoid precipitating a conflict or arousing the suspicions of the usurpers by openly conferring with Jung Lu, and she employed as her confidential intermediary the eunuch An Te-hai (of whom more will be heard later). By means of this man daily reports were safely despatched to Prince Kung at Peking, and, in the meanwhile, Yehonala affected an attitude of calm indifference, treating Prince Yi with a studied deference which lulled his suspicions.

On the 11th of the 8th Moon, the Board of Regents, after meeting to discuss the situation, issued a Decree condemning in strong terms a proposal put forward in a Memorial by the Censor, Tung Yüan-ch'un, that the two Empresses should be appointed Co-Regents, and referring to the death-bed Decree of the late Emperor as their own warrant of authority. At the same time they announced, in the name of the young Emperor, that the funeral cortège would start on its journey to the capital on the second day of the next Moon. This was the step for which Yehonala had been working and waiting. As Ministers of the Presence, the Regents were perforce obliged to accompany

the coffin throughout the entire journey (some 150 miles) to the capital, and the great weight of the catafalque, borne by one hundred and twenty men, would necessarily render the rate of progress very slow through the stony defiles of the hills. Resting places would have to be provided at stages of about fifteen miles along the route to shelter the Imperial remains and the attendant officials by night, so that the Regents might count on a journey of ten days at least, and longer in the event of bad weather. To the Empresses, the slow progress of the cortège was a matter of vital advantage, inasmuch as they were not to take part in the procession, and, travelling ahead of it, could reach the capital in five days with swift chair-bearers. Dynastic custom and Court etiquette prescribe that upon the departure of the funeral procession, the new Emperor and the consorts of the deceased sovereign should offer prayers and libations, and should then press on so as to be ready to perform similar acts of reverence on meeting the cortège at its destination. Yehonala thus found herself in a position of great strategic advantage, being enabled to reach the capital well in advance of her enemies, and she speedily laid her plans with Prince Kung to give them a warm reception.

Tsai Yüan and his colleagues were well aware that they were placed at grave disadvantage in having to remain behind the young Empress, with every prospect of serious trouble ahead; they, therefore, decided to have Yehonala and the Empress Consort assassinated on the road, and to that end gave orders that they should be escorted by the Chief Regent's personal bodyguard. Had it not been for Jung Lu, who got wind of the plot, the Dowagers would assuredly never have reached the capital alive. Acting with the promptitude which Yehonala inspired, he deserted the funeral cortège by night with a considerable following of his own men, and hastened on to the protection of the Empresses, overtaking them before they reached Ku-pei K'ou, at the end of the pass from the plains into Mongolia, which was the spot where the assassination was to have taken place.

Heavy rains had fallen just after the departure of the procession from Jehol. The roads became impassable, and the Empresses were compelled to seek shelter in the Long Mountain gorge, where no sort of accommodation had been provided. The cortège was then ten miles in their rear. Yehonala, mindful ever of the proprieties, sent back several men of her escort with a dutiful enquiry, in the name of her colleague and herself, as to the safety of the Imperial coffin. The reply, in the form of an Edict by Prince Yi and his Co-Regents, reported that the catafalque had reached the first resting place in safety; whereupon Yehonala, asserting as of right the prerogatives of supreme authority, donated to the bearers a thousand taels from her Privy Purse in recognition of their arduous services. Prince Yi, knowing full well that his own danger was increasing every hour, and would continue so long as the Empresses remained free to work against him, nevertheless played bravely the part prescribed for him, conforming in the grand manner to the traditions of his position. He forwarded a Memorial to the Empresses, humbly thanking them for their solicitude for the Emperor's remains. Yehonala, in reply, praised him for his faithful devotion to duty. Thus, on the road to Death, they played at Etiquette. Both these documents are filed in the Dynastic records and afford remarkable evidence of the supreme importance which Chinese and Manchus alike attach to forms and the written word even at the most critical moments. Similar instances could be cited at the height of the Boxer chaos.

The rains having ceased, the Empresses were able to proceed on their journey, and having come safely through the hill passes under Jung Lu's protection, they were free from further danger of ambush. They reached Peking on the 29th of the 9th Moon, three full days' journey ahead of the procession. Immediately upon their arrival a secret Council was held, at which were present the Emperor's brothers, together with the Ministers and Imperial clansmen known to be loyal to their cause. Long and anxiously did they confer. Although the Empress Mother was in

possession of the seal of legitimate succession, there was no known precedent for so drastic a step as the summary, and possibly violent, arrest of high officers of State convoying the Imperial coffin. Such a course, it was felt, would be regarded as disrespectful to the late Emperor and an inauspicious opening to the new reign. The consensus of opinion was, therefore, on the side of slow and cautious measures, and it was decided thus to proceed, conforming to all the outward observances of dynastic tradition. The coffin once arrived, the first step would be to deprive the Regents of their usurped authority; the rest would follow.

The cortège was due to arrive at the north-west gate of the city on the morning of the 2nd of the 10th Moon, and on the previous evening Prince Kung posted a large force of troops at this point to prevent any attempt at a *coup de main* by Tsai Yüan's followers. The boy Emperor, accompanied by the Empresses Dowager, came out to meet the coffin as it approached the city, and with him were the late Emperor's brothers and a great following of officials. As the catafalque passed through the gate, the Imperial party knelt and performed the prescribed acts of reverence. Before the coffin came the Imperial insignia, and behind it a large body of Manchu cavalry. Prince Yi and his Co-Regents, having performed their duty in bringing the coffin safely to the city, next proceeded, as required by custom, to make formal report in person to the young Emperor, upon fulfilment of their charge. For this purpose they were received in a large marquee erected just inside the city gate. Both Empresses were present, together with the late Emperor's brothers and the Grand Secretaries Kuei Liang and Chou Tsu-p'ei.

Yehonala, calmly assuming, as was her wont, the principal *rôle* and all attributes of authority, opened the proceedings by informing Prince Yi that the Empress Consort and she herself were grateful to him and to his colleagues for the services which they had rendered as Regents and Grand Councillors, of which duties they were now relieved.

Prince Yi, putting a bold face on it, replied that he himself was Chief Regent, legally appointed, that the Empresses had no power to divest him of authority properly conferred by the late Emperor, and that, during the minority of the new Emperor, neither she herself nor any other person was entitled to attend audience without his express permission.

"We shall see about that," said Yehonala, and forthwith gave orders to the attendant guards to place the three Regents under arrest. The Imperial party then hastened to the Palace to be ready to meet the coffin upon its arrival at the main entrance to the Forbidden City, for, however acute the crisis, the dead take precedence of the living in China. The deposed Regents quietly followed. All hope of escape or resistance was out of the question, for the streets were lined with troops faithful to Yehonala's cause. Her triumph was complete, essentially a triumph of mind over matter. It was her first taste of the pomp and circumstance of supreme power.

Forthwith the Empresses proceeded to regularise their position by issuing a Decree, under the Great Seal of "Lawfully transmitted authority," in which the conspirators and those found on the Grand Council were cashiered and ordered to await the determination of their punishment. Thereafter, in their capacity as Joint Regents, the Empresses duly performed the proper obeisances to the Imperial coffin at the eastern gate of the Palace, escorting it thence to its temporary resting place in the central Throne Hall.

In the security of Peking, and confident of the devotion of the troops, Yehonala now proceeded to act more boldly. She issued a second Decree in her own name and that of the Empress Consort, ordering that the three principal conspirators be handed over to the Imperial Clansmen's Court for the determination of a severe penalty. Pending the investigation, which was to be carried out under the Presidency of Prince Kung, they were to be stripped of all their titles and rank. The vindictive autocrat of the years to come speaks for the first time in this Edict.

"Their audacity in questioning our right to give audience to Prince Kung this morning shows a degree of wickedness inconceivable, and convicts them of the darkest designs. The punishment so far meted out to them is totally inadequate to the depth of their guilt."

Against Su Shun, in particular, the Empress's wrath burned fiercely. His wife had insulted her in the days of her disgrace at Jehol, and Yehonala had ever a good memory for insults. Next morning she issued the following Decree for his especial benefit:—

"Because of Su Shun's high treason, his wanton unsurpation of authority, his acceptance of bribes and generally unspeakable wickedness, we commanded that he be degraded and arrested by the Imperial Clansmen's Court. But on receipt of the Decree, Su Shun dared to make use of blasphemous language in regard to ourselves, forgetful of the inviolable relation between Sovereign and subject. Our hair stands on end with horror at such abominable treason. Moreover he has dared to allow his wife and family to accompany him, when on duty accompanying the Imperial coffin from Jehol, which is a most disgraceful violation of all precedent.[1] The whole of his property, both at Peking and at Jehol, is therefore confiscated, and no mercy shall be shown him."

As Su Shun's property was worth several millions sterling at the lowest estimate, the Empress Dowager thus acquired at one stroke the sinews of war and a substantial nucleus for that treasure hoard which henceforward was to be one of the main objects of her ambition, and a chief source of her power. During the present Dynasty there is a record of one official wealthier than Su Shun, namely Ho Shen, a Grand Secretary under Ch'ien Lung, whose property was similarly confiscated by that Emperor's successor.

But Yehonala's lust of vengeance was not yet appeased. Her next Decree, issued on the following day, gives evidence of that acquisitive faculty, that tendency to accumulate property and to safeguard it with housewifely thrift, which distinguished her to the end:—

[1] To allow women privily to accompany the Imperial cortège is a crime punishable by law with the penalty of the lingering death.

"Su Shun was erecting for himself a Palace at Jehol, which is not yet completed. Doubtless he has vast stores of treasure there. Doubtless also he has buried large sums of gold and silver somewhere in the vicinity of his Jehol residence, in anticipation of the possible discovery of his crimes. Let all his property in Jehol be carefully inventoried, when a Decree will be issued as to its disposal. Let all his property be carefully searched for treasure, to be handed over when found. Any attempt at concealment by the Jehol authorities will entail upon them the same punishment as that which is to be inflicted upon Su Shun."

On the 6th of the 10th Moon, Prince Kung and the Imperial Commission sent in their report on the quite perfunctory enquiry into the charges against Tsai Yüan and the other conspirators. In the Decree which followed upon this Report, the offenders were finally disposed of, Tsai Yüan and Tuan Hua being graciously permitted to commit suicide, and Su Shun being sentenced to decapitation.

IV

THE FIRST REGENCY

ALTHOUGH the collapse of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy, and the stern justice administered to its leaders, rendered Yehonala's position secure and made her *de facto* ruler of the Empire (for her colleague was, politically speaking, a negligible quantity, or nearly so), she was extremely careful, during the first years of the Regency, to avoid all conspicuous assumption of power and to keep herself and her ambitions in the background, while she omitted no opportunity of improving her knowledge of the art of government and of gaining the support of China's leading officials. For this reason all the Decrees of this period are issued in the name of the Emperor, and Tzŭ Hsi's assumption of authority was even less conspicuous than during her period of retirement at the Summer Palace after the conclusion of Kuang-Hsü's minority. The first Regency (1861-1873) may be described as Tzŭ Hsi's tentative period of rule, in which she tasted the sweets, while avoiding the appearance, of power. During the second Regency (1875–1889), while her name appeared only occasionally as the author of Imperial Decrees, she was careful to keep in her hands all official appointments, the granting of rewards and punishments and other matters of internal politics calculated to increase her personal popularity and prestige with the mandarinate. The "curtain was not suspended" during Kuang-Hsü's minority, as he was the nominee of the Empresses, whereas the Emperor T'ung-Chih held his mandate direct from the late Emperor, his father. It was not until the final Regency (1898-1908), which was not a Regency at all in the strict sense of the word but an usurpation of the Imperial prerogative during the lifetime of the sovereign, that, assured of the strength of her

position, she gave full rein to her love of power and, with something of the contempt which springs from long familiarity, took unto herself all the outward and visible signs of Imperial authority, holding audience daily in the Great Hall of the Palace, seated on the Dragon Throne, with the puppet Emperor relegated to a position of inferiority, recognised and acclaimed as the Old Buddha, the sole and undisputed ruler of the Empire.

At the outset of her career, she appears to have realised that the idea of female rulers had never been popular with the Chinese people; that even the Empress Wu of the eighth century, the greatest woman in Chinese history, was regarded as a usurper. She was aware that the Empress Lü (whose character, as described by historians, was not unlike her own), to whom was due the consolidation of power that marked the rise of the Han Dynasty, enjoys but scant respect from posterity. On the other hand, she knew—for the study of history was her pastime—that the Empresses Dowagers of the past had often wielded supreme power in the State, principles and precedents notwithstanding, and their example she determined to follow. Upon the taking off of the three chief conspirators, the Censors and Ministers urged her to deal in similar drastic fashion with their aiders and abettors, and Prince Kung was anxious, if not for revenge, at least for precautions being taken against those who had had the ear of the late Emperor during the last months of his reign. But Yehonala showed statesmanlike forbearance: early in life she realised that a few victims are better than many, and that lives spared often mean whole families of friends. After cashiering Prince Yi's remaining colleagues of the Grand Council, she dealt leniently with other offenders. When, for instance, Ch'en Tu-en, President of the Board of Civil appointments, was impeached on the ground that it was he who had first persuaded the Emperor to flee to Jehol against her advice, and that, after the Emperor's death, he alone of all the high officials at the capital had been summoned to Jehol by the usurping Regents, she contented herself with removing him from office, though

his guilt was clearly proved. Another official, a Minister of the Household, who had endeavoured to further the aims of the conspirators, by dissuading Hsien Feng from returning to Peking in the spring of 1861, on the plea that an insurrection was impending, was also cashiered. But there was nothing in the nature of a general proscription, in spite of the pecuniary and other advantages which usually commend retaliation to the party in power at Peking. In an able Decree, Tzŭ Hsi let it be understood that she wished to punish a few only, and those chiefly *pour encourager les autres*. It was always a characteristic of hers that, when her ends were safely secured, she adopted a policy of watchful leniency: *moderata durant*. In this instance she was fully aware of the fact that Tsai Yüan and his colleagues would never have had the opportunities, nor the courage, to conspire for the Regency, had they not been assured of the sympathy and support of many of the higher officials, but she preferred to let the iron hand rest in its velvet glove unless openly thwarted. She would have no proscriptions, no wreaking of private grudges and revenges. It was this characteristic of hers that, as will be seen in another place, obtained for her, amongst the people of Peking in particular, a reputation for almost quixotic gentleness, a reputation which we find expressed in frequent references to the "Benign Countenance," or "Benevolent Mother," and which undoubtly represented certain genuine impulses in her complex nature. So, having crushed the conspiracy, she contented herself with exhorting all concerned to "attend henceforth strictly to their duty, avoiding those sycophantic and evil tendencies which had brought Ch'en Tu-en and Huang Tsung-han to their disgrace." In another Decree she emphasised the principle that sins of omission are not much less grave than overt acts, roundly censuring the Princes and Ministers of her Government for having failed to denounce the conspirators at once, and charging them with cowardice. It was fear and nothing else, she said, that had prevented them from revealing the truth; and then, with one of those naïve

Photo, Ogawa, Tokio.

EXTERIOR OF THE CH'IEN CH'ING PALACE.

touches which make Chinese Edicts a perpetual feast, she added that, should there be any further plots of usurpers, she would expect to be informed of their proceedings without delay. Above all, she bade the Imperial Clan take warning by the fate of the three conspirators, and intimated that any further attempts of this kind would be far more severely dealt with.

One of the first steps of the Regency was to determine the title of the new reign. The usurping Princes had selected the characters "Ch'i-Hsiang," meaning well-omened happiness," but to Yehonala's scholarly taste and fine sense of fitness, the title seemed ill-chosen and redundant, and as she wished to obliterate all memory of the usurpers' *régime,* she chose in its place the characters "T'ung-Chih," meaning "Joint Rule," in allusion to the double regency, in order to emphasise her own share in the government. As far as all good augury for the Emperor himself was concerned, one title was, as events proved, no more likely to be effective than the other.

On the same day as the proclamation of the new reign was made by Edict, the Empresses Dowager issued a Decree explaining, and ostensibly deprecating, the high honour thrust upon them.

"Our assumption of the Regency was utterly contrary to our wishes, but we have complied with the urgent request of our Princes and Ministers, because we realise that it is essential that there should be a higher authority to whom they may refer. So soon as ever the Emperor shall have completed his education, we shall take no further part in the Government, which will then naturally revert to the system prescribed by all dynastic tradition. Our sincere reluctance in assuming the direction of affairs must be manifest to all. Our officials are expected loyally to assist us in the arduous task which we have undertaken."

Following upon this, a Decree was issued in the name of the Emperor, which represented the boy as thanking their Majesties the Regents and promising that, so soon as he came of age, he would endeavour, by dutiful ministrations, to prove his gratitude.

For the procedure of Government it was then arranged

that the Empresses should daily hold joint audiences in the side Hall of the main Palace. At these, and at all except the great Court ceremonies, the Emperor's great-uncle and four brothers were excused from performing the "kotow," the Emperor's respect for the senior generation being thus indirectly exhibited.

Upon their acceptance of the Regency, honorific titles were conferred upon both Empresses. Each character in these titles represents a grant from the public funds of 100,000 taels per annum (say, at that time, £20,000). Thus the Empress Consort became known by the title of Tzŭ An (Motherly and Restful) while Yehonala became Tzŭ Hsi (Motherly and Auspicious), one being the Empress of the Eastern, and the other of the Western Palace. At various subsequent periods, further honorific characters, in pairs, were added unto them, so that, on her seventieth birthday, Tzŭ Hsi was the proud possessor of sixteen. On that occasion she modestly and virtuously refused the four additional characters with which the Emperor Kuang-Hsü (not unprompted) desired to honour her. Tzŭ An lived to receive ten in all; both ladies received two on their thirtieth birthdays, two on the Emperor T'ung-Chih's accession, two just before his death in recognition of their "ministrations" during his attack of small-pox, and two on their fortieth birthdays. Tzŭ Hsi received two more on her fiftieth birthday, two on Kuang-Hsü's marriage, and two on her sixtieth birthday. Tzŭ Hsi's complete official designation at the end of her life was not easy to remember. It ran, "Tzŭ-Hsi-Tuan-yu-K'ang-yi-Chao-yü-Chuang-ch'eng-Shou-kung-Ch'in-hsien-Ch'ung-hsi- Huang Tai-hou," which, being translated, means "The Empress Dowager, motherly, auspicious, orthodox, heaven-blessed, prosperous, all-nourishing, brightly manifest, calm, sedate, perfect, long-lived, respectful, reverend, worshipful, illustrious and exalted."

At the beginning of the Regency it suited Yehonala to conciliate and humour Prince Kung. In conjunction with her colleague, she therefore bestowed upon him the titles of "I-Cheng Wang," or Prince Adviser to the Govern-

ment, and by special Decree she made the title of "Ch'in Wang," or Prince of the Blood (which had been bestowed upon him by the late Emperor), hereditary in his family for ever.[1] Prince Kung begged to be excused from accepting the former honour, whereupon ensued a solemn parade of refusal on the part of the Empresses, one of whom, as events proved, certainly wanted no adviser. Eventually, after much deprecation, their Majesties gave way as regards the hereditary title, but on the understanding that the offer would be renewed at a more fitting season. Yehonala who, in her better moments of grateful memory, could scarcely forget the brave part which Prince Kung had played for her at Jehol, made amends by adopting his daughter as a Princess Imperial, granting her the use of the Yellow palanquin. The influence of this Princess over Tzŭ Hsi, especially towards the end, was great, and it was strikingly displayed in 1900 on behalf of Prince Tuan and the Boxer leaders.

Ignorant at the outset of many things in the procedure of Government routine, feeling her way through the labyrinth of party politics and foreign affairs, afraid of her own youth and inexperience, it was but natural that Tzŭ Hsi should have recourse to the ripe wisdom of the late Emperor's brother and be guided by his opinion. But as time went on, as her knowledge of affairs broadened and deepened, her autocratic instincts gradually asserted themselves in an increasing impatience of advice and restraint. As, by the study of history and the light of her own intelligence, she gained confidence in the handling of State business and men, the guidance which had previously been welcome became distasteful, and eventually assumed the character of interference. Despotic by nature, Tzŭ Hsi was not the woman to tolerate interference in any matter where her own mind was made up, and Prince Kung, on his side, was of a disposition little less proud and independent than her own. When the young Yehonala began to evince a disposition to dispense with his advice, he was therefore not inclined to conceal his displeasure, and relations speedily

[1] Hereditary titles in China usually descend in a diminishing scale.

became strained. As Tzŭ Hsi was at no pains to hide her resentment, he gradually came to adopt a policy of instigating her colleague, the Empress of the East, to a more independent attitude, a line of action which could not fail to produce ill-feeling and friction in the Palace. In the appointment of officials, also, which is the chief object and privilege of power in China, he was in the habit of promoting and protecting his own nominees without reference to Yehonala, by direct communications to the provinces. Eye-witnesses of the events of the period have recorded their impression that his attitude towards both Empresses at the commencement of the Regency was somewhat overbearing; that he was inclined to presume upon the importance of his own position and services, and that on one occasion at audience, he even presumed to inform the Empresses that they owed their position to himself, a remark which Tzŭ Hsi was not likely to forget or forgive.

At the audiences of the Grand Council, it was the custom for the two Empresses to sit on a raised daïs, each on her separate Throne, immediately in front of which was suspended a yellow silk curtain; they were therefore invisible to the Councillors, who were received separately and in the order of their seniority, Prince Kung coming first in his capacity as "adviser to the Government." Beside their Majesties on the daïs, contrary to dynastic house-law, stood their attendant eunuchs; they were in the habit of peeping through the folds of the curtain, keeping a careful eye upon the demeanour of the officials in audience, with a view to noting any signs of disrespect or breach of etiquette. Strictly speaking, no official, however high his rank, might enter the Throne room unless summoned by the chief eunuch in attendance, but Prince Kung considered himself superior to such rules, and would enter unannounced. Other breaches of etiquette he committed which, as Her Majesty's knowledge of affairs increased, were carefully noted against him; for instance, he would raise his voice when replying to their Majesties' instructions (which were always given by Tzŭ Hsi), and on one occasion, he even ventured to ask that Tzŭ Hsi should repeat something she had just said, and

which he pretended not to have understood. His attitude, in short (say the chroniclers), implied an assumption of equality which the proud spirit of the young Empress would not brook. Living outside the Palace as he did, having free intercourse with Chinese and foreign officials on all sides, he was naturally in a position to intrigue against her, did he so desire. Tzŭ Hsi, on the other hand, was likely to imagine and exaggerate intrigues, since nearly all her information came from the eunuchs and would therefore naturally assume alarming proportions. There is little doubt that she gradually came to believe in the possibility of Prince Kung working against her authority, and she therefore set herself to prove to him that his position and prerogatives depended entirely upon her good will.

She continued watching her opportunity and patiently biding her time until the occasion presented itself in the fourth year of the Regency (April, 1865). In a moment of absent-mindedness or bravado, Prince Kung ventured to rise from his knees during an audience, thus violating a fundamental rule of etiquette originally instituted to guard the Sovereign against any sudden attack. The eunuchs promptly informed their Majesties, whereupon Tzŭ Hsi called loudly for help, exclaiming that the Prince was plotting some evil treachery against the persons of the Regents. The Guards rushed in, and Prince Kung was ordered to leave the presence at once. His departure was speedily followed by the issue of an Imperial Decree, stating that he had endeavoured to usurp the authority of the Throne and persistently overrated his own importance to the State. He was accordingly dismissed from his position as adviser to the Government, relieved of his duties on the Grand Council and other high offices in the Palace; even his appointment as head of the Foreign Office, or Tsungli Yamên, was cancelled. "He had shown himself unworthy of their Majesties' confidence," said the Edict, "and had displayed gross nepotism in the appointment of high officials: his rebellious and usurping tendencies must be sternly checked."

A month later, however, Tzŭ Hsi, realising that her own position was not unassailable, and that her treatment of this powerful Prince had created much unfavourable comment at Court and in the provinces, saved her face and the situation simultaneously, by issuing a Decree in the name of herself and her colleague, which she described as a Decree of explanation. In this document she took no small credit to herself for strength of character and virtue in dealing severely with her near kinsmen in the interests of the State, and pointed to the fact that any undue encouragement of the Imperial clansmen, when inclined to take a line of their own, was liable, as history had repeatedly proved, to involve the country in destructive dissension. Her real object in inflicting punishment on the Prince for treating the Throne with disrespect was to save him from himself and from the imminent peril of his own folly. But now that several Memorials had been sent in by Censors and others, requesting that his errors be pardoned, the Throne could have no possible objection to showing clemency and, the position having been made clear, Prince Kung was restored to the position of Chamberlain, and to the direction of the Foreign Office. The Prince, in fact, needed a lesson in politeness and, having got it, Her Majesty was prepared to let bygones be bygones, it being clearly understood that, for the future, he should display increased energy and loyalty as a mark of his sincere gratitude to their Majesties.

In the autumn of this year, 1865, took place the burial of the late Emperor, Hsien-Feng, the preparation of whose tomb had been proceeding for just four years. With him was buried his consort Sakota, who had died in 1850, a month before her husband's accession to the Throne; her remains had been awaiting burial at a village temple, seven miles west of the capital, for fifteen years. As usual, the funeral ceremonies and preparation of the tombs involved vast expenditure, and there had been considerable difficulty in finding the necessary funds, for the southern provinces, which, under ordinary circumstances would have made the largest contributions, were still suffering severely from the

ravages of the Taiping rebellion. The Emperor's mausoleum had cost nominally ten million taels, of which amount, of course, a very large proportion had been diverted for the benefit of the officials of the Household and others.

The young Emperor, and the Empresses Regent proceeded, as in duty bound, to the Eastern Tombs to take their part in the solemn burial ceremonies. Prince Kung was in attendance; to him had fallen the chief part in the preparation of the tomb and in the provision of the funds, and Her Majesty had no cause to complain of any scamping of his duties. The body of the Emperor, in an Imperial coffin of catalpa wood, richly lacquered and inscribed with Buddhist sutras, was borne within the huge domed grave chamber, and there deposited in the presence of their Majesties upon its "jewelled bedstead," the pedestal of precious metals prepared to receive it. In the place of the concubines and eunuchs, who in prehistoric days used to be buried alive with the deceased monarch, wooden and paper figures of life size were placed beside the coffin, reverently kneeling to serve their lord in the halls of Hades. The huge candles were lighted, prayers were recited, and a great wealth of valuable ornaments arranged within the grave chamber; gold and jade sceptres, and a necklace of pearls were placed in the coffin. And when all was duly done, the great door of the chamber was slowly lowered and sealed in its place.

Next day the Empresses Dowager issued a Decree in which Prince Kung's meritorious acts are graciously recognised, and their Majesties' thanks accorded to him for the satisfactory fulfilment of the funeral ceremonies.

This Decree contains the following significant passage:—

"The Decree which we issued last Spring was caused by the Prince's want of attention to small details of etiquette, and if we were obliged to punish him severely, our motives have been clearly explained. No doubt everyone in the Empire is well aware of the facts, but as posterity may possibly fail to realise all the circumstances, and as unjust blame might fall upon the memory of Prince Kung, if that Decree were allowed to remain

inscribed amongst the Imperial Archives, thus suggesting a flaw in the white jade of his good name, we now command that the Decree in which we announced Prince Kung's dismissal from office be expunged from the annals of our reign. Thus is our affection displayed towards a deserving servant, and his good name preserved untarnished to all time."

The Empress Dowager was essentially a woman of moods, and these Imperial Decrees simply reflect the fact, at the beginning of her autocratic rule, as they did until its close. Four years later Prince Kung was to incur her deep and permanent dislike by conspiring with her colleague to deprive her of her favourite, the chief eunuch An Te-hai.

V

TZŬ HSI AND THE EUNUCHS

ONE of the facts upon which modern Chinese historians, Censors, Imperial Tutors and Guardians of the Heir Apparent have repeatedly laid stress, is that the Ming Dynasty became effeminate, then degenerate, and was eventually lost, because of the demoralising influence of the eunuch system on the Court and its officials entourage. Upon this text, moral exhortations in the best classical manner were addressed to the Throne for centuries, regardless of the consideration that most of the writers owed their positions, and hoped to owe further advancement, to the eunuchs, who had the sovereign's ear. These Memorials were usually only a part of the hoary fabric of pious platitudes and shadowy shibboleths which loom so large in the stock in trade of China's bureaucacy (in which matter China stands not alone), and the Empress Dowager, under whose rule the evil grew and assumed monstrous proportions, was ever wont to play her part in this elaborate farce, by solemnly approving the views of the bold critics and by professing the greatest indignation at the misdeeds of her eunuch myrmidons and retainers.

There have been, of course, sincere and eloquent critics of this pernicious system and its attendant evils; in fact, scarcely a reformer worthy of the name during the past fifty years has failed to place the abolition of eunuchs in the front rank of the measures necessary to bring China into line with the civilised Powers. There is no doubt that one of the first causes of the *coup d'état* in 1898 arose from the hatred of the Chief Eunuch, Li Lien-ying, for the Emperor Kuang-Hsü (who years before had ventured to have him beaten), and his not unnatural apprehension that the Emperor intended to follow up his reforms of the

Peking Administration by devoting his attention to the Palace and to the abolition of eunuchs. As to the Boxer rising, it has been clearly proved that this notorious and powerful Chamberlain used all the weight of his great influence with his Imperial mistress on behalf of the anti-foreign movement, and that, if justice had been done (that is to say had he not been protected by the Russian Legation), his should have been one of the very first names on the Peace Protocol "Black List." The part which Li Lien-ying played in these two national crises of recent years is mentioned here chiefly to emphasise the fact that the platitudinous utterances of the orthodox express, as usual, a very real and widespread grievance, and that the falsetto notes of the Censorate were answered by a deep undertone of dissatisfaction and disgust throughout the provinces. It was for this reason that progressive and patriotic Chinese (*e.g.* men like Yüan Shih-k'ai and T'ang Shao-yi, who realised how greatly the persistence of this barbarous medievalism lowered China in the eyes of the world), as well as the unanimous voice of the vernacular Press, repeatedly urged that the Court should dispense with eunuchs, a measure which the Regent favoured, but which—such was the power wielded by these "fawning sycophants"—would undoubtedly have been difficult and possibly dangerous. As early as 1906, *The Times* correspondent at Peking was discussing the possibility of their early removal as one of the many reforms which then shone so brightly on the horizon. In the Chinese conservative's opinion, however, which still weighs heavily in China, there are centuries of precedents and arguments to be adduced in favour of a Court system which obtained continuously since long before the beginning of the Christian era, which coincided with the Chinese accepted ideas of polygamy, and recognised the vital importance of legitimacy of succession in relation to the national religion of ancestor worship. On the other hand, it is true that in the golden days of the Sage Emperors at the beginning of the Chou Dynasty, eunuchs had no place in the body politic. Later, during the period of that Dynasty's decay and the era of

the feudal States, Confucius refers with disapproval to their baneful influence, so that the Sage's authority may be adduced against them and their proceedings.

With the establishment of the present Dynasty at Peking (1644), the Manchus took over, as conquerors, all the existing machinery and *personnel* of the Chinese Court, eunuchs included, but they lost no time in restricting the latter's activities and opportunities. At the first audience held by the young Emperor Shun-Chih, the high officials, Manchu and Chinese, united to protest against the recent high-handed proceedings of the Court menials, declaring them to be "fit only to sweep floors, and in no wise entitled to have access to the Monarch." Regulations were promptly introduced, which remained in force (on paper) till the abdication in 1912, forbidding any eunuch to occupy any official position, or to hold any honorific rank or title higher than a Button of the fourth class. More important still, in view of the far-reaching conspiracy of the Chief Eunuch, Wei Chung-hsien (who committed suicide to escape the capital penalty), was the law then introduced, which forbade any eunuch to leave the capital on any pretext whatsoever. For the next two hundred years, thanks to the wise rule and excellent traditions handed down by the two famous Emperors K'ang-Hsi and Ch'ien-Lung, the Palace eunuchs were kept generally under very strict discipline; but with the present century, when degeneration had set in strongly under the dissolute monarch Hsien-Feng, and even before the appearance of Yehonala on the scene, their evil influence had again become paramount in the Forbidden City. With Tzŭ Hsi's accession to power, all the corruption, intrigues and barbarous proceedings, that had characterised the last Mings, were gradually re-established and became permanent features of her Court.

Of the power which the eunuchs exercised throughout the whole of Tzŭ Hsi's reign, there is no possible doubt: the abuses which they practised under her protection, abuses flagrant and unconcealed, increased with the passing years and her own growing indifference to criticism,

until, after 1898, her favourite and chief body-servant, Li Lien-ying did not scruple to boast that he could make or mar the highest officials at his pleasure and defy the Son of Heaven on his Throne. Of the countless legends of debauchery in the Palace of orgies devised for Tzŭ Hsi by the Court eunuchs and actors, there is naturally nothing approaching to direct evidence: the frequent denunciations by Censors and the scurrilous writings of Cantonese and other lampooners, afford at best but circumstantial proof. The writings of K'ang Yu-wei and his associates, in particular, are clearly inspired by blind and unscrupulous hatred, and so inaccurate in matters of common knowledge and history, that one must perforce discount the value of their statements wherever the Empress Dowager or Jung Lu are concerned. But common report in China, as elsewhere, is usually based on some foundation of truth, and in Peking, where the mass of the population has always been conspicuously loyal to Tzŭ Hsi, there have never been two opinions as to the extravagance and general profligacy of her Court and of the evils of the eunuch *régime*. Nor is there room for doubt as to the deplorable effect exercised by these vicious underlings on weak and undisciplined Emperors, rulers of decadent instincts often encouraged in vicious practices to their speedy undoing. That this was the fate of Tzŭ Hsi's own son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih, is well-known, nor is there any doubt that the deaths of both Hsien-Feng and Kuang-Hsü were hastened, if not caused, by the temptations to which they were exposed by their vicious environment. The inner history of the Celestial Empire and the Manchu Dynasty during the last seventy years is inextricably bound up with that of the Palace eunuchs and their far-reaching intrigues. During the half century of Tzŭ Hsi's rule, the power behind the Throne (literally a power of darkness in high places) was that of her favourite Chamberlains. Of these the last, who survived her, Li Lien-ying, was known by his nickname of "Cobbler's Wax Li" (P'i Hsiao Li)[1]

[1] So named because, before becoming a eunuch at the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed to a cobbler at his native place, Ho-Chien fu, in Chihli, from which district most of the eunuchs come.

from one end of the Empire to the other as the chief "squeezer" and arch villain of many a Palace tragedy. His influence over his Imperial mistress was indeed remarkable; on all occasions, except State audiences, she was wont to treat him with an affectionate familiarity, and to allow him a *sans-gêne,* to which no courtier, nor any member of her own family (save perhaps Jung Lu) dared ever aspire.

During the Court's residence, and the Emperor's illness, at Jehol in 1861, the young Yehonala had occasion to notice and to appreciate the intelligence and willing service rendered by one of the eunuchs in immediate attendance upon her; this servant, by name An Te-hai, became her faithful henchman throughout the crisis of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy, and her intermediary and confidant in her dealings with the young guardsman, Jung Lu. Upon her accession to the Co-Regency, he became her favourite attendant and emissary, and later her *âme damnée,* sharing in all her ambitious hopes and plans, with no small advantage to himself, while at the same time employing his undeniable talents to the diversion of the young widow's mind by the provision of the elaborate Court pageants and theatrical entertainments which her soul loved. An Te-hai was himself an actor of no mean ability and exceedingly handsome of his person.

It was at this time, before the Regency was firmly established and while yet the reverberating echoes of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy lingered in Chihli, that the leading Censors began to send in Memorials against the self-evident extravagance and the rumoured profligacy of Tzŭ Hsi's Palace. The young Yehonala, headstrong and already impatient of criticism and restraint, confident also in the strength and loyalty of her immediate following, never allowed these remonstrances to affect her conduct in the slightest degree; nevertheless, a stickler always for etiquette and appearances, and an adept at "face-saving" arts, she had no objection to expressing the heartiest approval of, and agreement with, her professional moralists. On more than one occasion, in those first years, we find her proclaiming in most suitably worded Edicts,

pious intentions which were never intended to be taken seriously by anyone, and never were. The following Decree, issued in the third year of the Regency (1864), is a case in point, and particularly interesting in that it refers to the wholesale pilfering by eunuchs in the Palace.

A Decree in the name of the two Empresses Regent, in the third year of the Emperor T'ung-Chih :—

"The Censor Chia To memorialises, saying that it has come to his knowledge that certain of the eunuchs who perform theatricals in the Imperial Household, have had their costumes made of tribute silks and satins taken from the Imperial storehouses. He asserts that they perform daily before the Throne and regularly receive largesse to the amount of thousands of taels. He asks that these practices be forbidden and discontinued forthwith, in order that all tendency towards vicious courses may be checked.

"With reference to this Memorial, it should be stated that last year, although the twenty-seven months of Imperial mourning for the late monarch were drawing to their close, we issued a Decree forbidding all festivities, for the reason that His late Majesty's remains had not yet been removed to their final place of sepulture; at the same time we gave orders that the seasonal tribute in kind, and provincial offerings, should be forwarded, as usual, in order to provide eventually for the customing of the Palace theatricals, with reference to which matter we intended to issue another Decree in due course, upon the conclusion of the funeral ceremonies. We seized opportunity, in this same Edict, to abolish once and for all the custom of bringing actors to the Palace to be made eunuchs, holding it to be wise, while His Majesty is still a minor, that everything that might tend in any way to lead him into paths of extravagance and dissipation should be firmly nipped in the bud. The Censor's present Memorial has therefore filled us with real amazement. At a time like this, when rebellions are still raging, and our people are in sore distress, when our treasuries are empty and our revenues insufficient for the needs of Government, our hearts are heavy with sorrowful thoughts, and must be so, especially as long as His late Majesty's remains have not yet been born to their final resting place. How then could we possibly permit such a state of things as the Censor describes? [1] Furthermore, it is the duty of the Comptroller of our Household to keep a complete inventory of all bullion and silken stuffs in the Palace,

[1] This form of argument, under similar conditions, obtains all over the Empire. "How could I possibly squeeze my master?" says the servant.

none of which can be touched without our express permission. Surely this is sufficient to prove that all these rumours are utterly devoid of foundation.

"Nevertheless, in our remote seclusion of the Palace, it is inevitable that we should be kept in ignorance of much that goes on, so that it is just possible there may be some ground for these reports. It may be that certain evil-disposed eunuchs have been committing irregularities beyond the Palace precincts, and, if so, such conduct must be stopped at all costs. We hereby command that drastic measures be taken to deal with the offenders at once.

"It is imperatively necessary that the Emperor, in the intervals of his studies, should have about his person only honest and steady retainers, with whom he may converse on the arts and practice of government. If his attendants are evil men and make it their business to flatter his ears and divert his eyes with luxurious and effeminate pastimes, the result might well be to produce in His Majesty most undesirable tendencies; and any fault in the Emperor, however trifling, is liable to involve the State in far-reaching misfortunes. We therefore hereby authorise the Ministers of our Household to see to it that the Chief Eunuch enforces strict discipline upon all his subordinates, and should any of them hereafter venture to commit presumptuous acts, or to display their overweening arrogance, they must at once be arrested by the police and severely punished. And should such a case occur the Chief Eunuch will also be dismissed for neglect of his duty of supervision, and the Comptrollers of the Household will incur our severe displeasure, with penalties. Let this Decree be copied and preserved in the archives of the Household and the Ante-Chambers."

Thus, Tzŭ Hsi, in her best manner, "for the gallery." But, "in the deep seclusion of our Palace," life went on as before, the merry round of an Oriental Trianon, while the Chief Eunuch's influence over the young Empress became greater every day. It was common knowledge, and the gossip of the tea-houses, that his lightest whim was law in the Forbidden City; that Yehonala and he, dressed in fancy costumes from historical plays, would make frequent excursions on the Palace lake; that he frequently wore the Dragon robes sacred to the use of the sovereign, and that the Empress had publicly presented him with the jade "ju-yi," symbol of royal power. Under these circumstances it was only natural, if not inevitable, that unfounded rumours should be rife in exaggeration of

the real facts, and so we find it reported that An Te-hai was no eunuch, and again, that Yehonala had been delivered of a son[1] of which he was the father; many fantastic and moving tales were current of the licentious festivities of the Court, of students masquerading as eunuchs and then being put out of the way in the subterranean galleries of the Palace. Rumours and tales of orgies; inventions no doubt, for the most part, yet inevitable in the face of the notorious and undeniable corruption that had characterised the Court and the seraglio under the dissolute Hsien-Feng, and justified, if not confirmed, as time went on, by an irresistible consensus of opinion in the capital, and by fully substantiated events in the Empress Dowager's career.

Of these events, one, which had far-reaching results, was her violation of the dynastic house-law which forbade eunuchs to leave the capital. In 1869, being short of funds, and desiring to replenish her Privy Purse without consulting Prince Kung or her colleague the Co-Regent, she despatched her favourite An Te-hai on a special mission to Shantung, where he was to collect tribute in her name.[2] By this time the Chief Eunuch had incurred the bitter enmity of several of the Princes of the Imperial Clan, and especially of Prince Kung, not only because of his growing influence over Tzŭ Hsi, but because of his insolent bearing to all at Court. On one occasion the Empress had curtly sent word to Prince Kung that she could not grant him audience because she was busy talking to the eunuch, an insult which the Prince never forgot and which cost the favourite his life, besides leading to the disgrace of the Prince and other consequences serious to the Empire.

The Chief Eunuch's illegal mission to Shantung, and

[1] Chinese pamphleteers in Canton record the event with much detail, and state that this son is alive to-day under the name of Chiu Min.

[2] A fantastic account of this mission is contained in an imaginative work (*La Vie Secrète de la Cour de Chine*, Paris, 1910), where the Chief Eunuch's name is given as "Siao." This curious blunder is due to the fact that the Eunuch's nickname, on account of his stature, was "Hsiao An'rh" (little Ann), just as Li Lien-Ying's was "P'i Hsiao" Li all over China.

H.M. Tzŭ Hsi, with the Consort (Lung Yü) and Principal Concubine (Chin Fei) of H.M. Kuang-Hsu, accompanied by Court Ladies and Eunuchs.

his outrageous behaviour in that province, provided Prince Kung with a long-sought opportunity not only of wreaking vengeance on him but of creating rivalry and enmity between the Empresses Regent. The Governor of Shantung, an able and courageous official named Ting Pao-chen, who had distinguished himself in the Taiping rebellion, was highly incensed at the arrogant eunuch's assumption of Imperial authority, and being quite *au courant* with the position of affairs in the Palace, he reported direct to Prince Kung and asked for instructions. The Governor's despatch reached the Prince while Tzŭ Hsi was amusing herself with theatricals; without a moment's delay he sought audience of Tzŭ An, the Co-Regent Empress, and, playing upon her vanity and weak disposition, induced her to sign a Decree, which he drafted in her presence, ordering the eunuch's summary decapitation the customary formality of a trial in Peking being dispensed with. Tzŭ An, hard pressed as she was, gave her consent reluctantly and with a clear presentiment of evil to come from the wrath of her masterful colleague. "The Western Empress will assuredly kill me for this," she is reported to have said to the Prince, as she handed him the sealed Decree, which Kung sent off post-haste by special courier.

The following is the text of this interesting document :—

"Ting Pao-chen reports that a eunuch has been creating disturbances in the province of Shantung. According to the Department Magistrate of Te Chou, a eunuch named An and his followers passed through that place by way of the Imperial Canal, in two dragon barges, with much display of pomp and pageantry. He announced that he had come on an Imperial mission to procure Dragon robes. His barges flew a black banner, bearing in its centre the triple Imperial emblems of the Sun, and there were also Dragon and Phœnix flags flying on both sides of his vessels.[1] A goodly company of both sexes were in attendance on this person; there were female musicians, skilled in the use of string and wind instruments. The banks of the Canal were lined with crowds of spectators, who witnessed with amazement and admiration his progress. The 21st day of last month happened to be this eunuch's birthday, so he arrayed

[1] The Phœnix flag signified that he was sent by the Empresses Regent.

himself in Dragon robes, and stood on the foredeck of his barge, to receive the homage of his suite. The local Magistrate was just about to order his arrest when the barges set sail and proceeded southwards. The Governor adds that he has already given orders for his immediate arrest.

"We are dumbfoundered at this report. How can we hope ever to purify the standard of morals in the Palace and frighten evil-doers, unless we make an example of this insolent eunuch, who has dared to leave Peking without our permission and to commit these lawless deeds? The Governors of the three provinces of Shantung, Honan and Kiangsu are ordered to seek out and arrest the eunuch An, whom we had formerly honoured with rank of the sixth grade and the decoration of the crow's feather. Upon his being duly identified by his companions, let him be forthwith beheaded, without further formalities, no attention is to be paid to any crafty explanations which he may attempt to make. The Governors concerned will be held responsible in the event of failure to effect his arrest."

Tzŭ Hsi remained for some time in blissful ignorance of her favourite's danger, and even of his death. No doubt the Chief Eunuch's great unpopularity enabled Prince Kung and the Empress Tzŭ An to keep the matter secret until the offender was past helping. Ten days later, Tzŭ An issued a second Decree, extracted from her like the first by Prince Kung, in which the eunuch's execution is recorded, as follows:—

"Ting Pao-chen now reports that the eunuch An was arrested in the T'ai An prefecture and has been summarily beheaded. Our dynasty's house-law is most strict in regard to the proper discipline of eunuchs, and provides severe punishment for any offences which they may commit. They have always been sternly forbidden to make expeditions to the provinces, or to create trouble. Nevertheless, An Te-hai actually had the brazen effrontery to violate this law, and for his crimes his execution is only a fitting reward. In future, let all eunuchs take warning by his example; should we have further cause to complain, the chief eunuchs of the several departments of the Household, will be punished as well as the actual offender. Any eunuch who may hereafter pretend that he has been sent on Imperial business to the provinces shall be cast into chains at once, and sent to Peking for punishment."

This Decree has a half-hearted ring, as if some of the conspirators' fear of the coming wrath of Yehonala had

crept into it. Very different in wording are the Edicts in which Tzŭ Hsi condemns an offender to death. We miss her trenchant style, that "strength of the pen" which was the secret of much of her power.

Simultaneously with the death of An, in Shantung, several eunuchs of his following were put to death by strangling; six others escaped from the police, of whom five were recaptured and executed. The Chief Eunuch's family were sent as slaves to the frontier guards in the north-west. Several days after the execution of Tzŭ Hsi's favourite, the eunuch who had escaped made his way back to Peking, and sent word to the Empress through Li Lien-ying, another of her confidential attendants. At first she could scarcely believe that her timorous and self-effacing colleague could have dared to sign these Decrees on her own responsibility and in secret, no matter what amount of pressure might have been brought to bear upon her. When she realised what had occurred, the Palace witnessed one of those outbursts of torrential rage with which it was to become familiar in years to come. Swiftly making her way to the "Palace of Benevolent Peace," the residence of her Co-Regent, she wrathfully demanded an explanation. Tzŭ An, terrified, endeavoured to put the whole blame upon Prince Kung; but the plea did not serve her, and Tzŭ Hsi, after a fierce quarrel, left, vowing vengeance on them both. This event marked a turning point in the career of Yehonala, who, until then, had maintained amicable relations with her less strong-minded colleague, and all the appearances of equality in the Co-Regency. Henceforward she devoted more time and closer attention to affairs of State, consolidating her position and power with a clear determination to prevent any further interference with her supreme authority. From this time forward she definitely assumes the first place as ruler of China, relegating her colleague completely to the background.

When, on the morning after the storm, Prince Kung appeared in the Audience Hall, Tzŭ Hsi sternly rebuked him, threatening him with dismissal and the forfeiture of his titles. For the time being, however, she allowed him to

go unpunished, but she never forgave the offence, and she took her revenge in due season: he suffered the effects of her resentment as long as he lived. Her first act was to pass over his son, the rightful heir to the Throne, upon the death of T'ung-Chih. It is true that in after years she permitted him to hold high office, but this was, firstly, because she could not afford to dispense with his services, and, secondly, because of her genuine affection for his daughter, whom she had adopted as her own child.

An Te-hai was succeeded in the post of Chief Eunuch and confidential attendant on her Majesty by Li Lien-ying, of whom mention has already been made. For the next forty years this Palace servant was destined to play a leading part in the government of China, to hold in his supple hands the lives and deaths of thousands, to make and unmake the highest officials of the Empire, and to levy rich tribute on the eighteen provinces. As a youth of sixteen, when he "left the family" (as the Chinese euphemistically describe the making of a eunuch), Li was remarkable for his handsome appearance and good manners, advantages which never failed to carry weight with Tzŭ Hsi. It is recorded on trustworthy authority that at an early stage in his career he had so ingratiated himself with Her Majesty that he was permitted unusual liberties, remaining seated in her presence, aye, even on the Throne itself. In the privacy of her apartments he was allowed to discuss whatever subjects he chose, without being spoken to, and as years passed and his familiarity with the Old Buddha increased, he became her regular and authoritative adviser on all important State business. In later years, when speaking of Her Majesty to outsiders, even to high officials, he would use the familiar pronoun "*Tsa-men*" [1] meaning "we two," which is usually reserved for blood relations or persons on a footing of familiar equality, and he was currently known among his followers by the almost sacrilegious title of "Lord of nine thousand years," the Emperor being Lord of ten thousand. Only

[1] The same expression is used of a novice taking the vows of Buddhist priesthood.

on solemn State occasions did he observe the etiquette prescribed for his class and a modest demeanour.

Corrupt, avaricious, vindictive and fiercely cruel to his enemies and rivals, it must be said in Li's favour that he was, at least, wholly devoted and faithful to his Imperial mistress, and that at times of peril he never failed to exert himself to the utmost for her comfort and protection. He possessed, moreover, other good qualities which appealed not only to Tzŭ Hsi but to many of the high Manchu officials, who did not consider it beneath their pride to throng for admission at his private residence. He was cheerful, fond of a joke, an excellent actor [1] and *raconteur*, and a generous host: above all, he was passing rich. At the Empress Dowager's funeral, in November 1909, this aged retainer presented a pathetic and almost venerable spectacle, enough to make one forget for a moment the accumulated horrors of his seventy years of wickedness. Smitten with age and sickness, he could scarcely totter the short distance which the cortège had to make on foot; but of all that vast throng of officials and Palace servants, he alone showed unmistakable signs of deep and genuine grief. Watching the intelligent features of this maker of secret history, one could not but wonder what thoughts were passing through that subtle brain, as he shuffled past the Pavilion of the Diplomatic Body, escorting for the last time his great mistress,—the close confidant, not to say comrade, of all those long and eventful years. For half a century he had served her with unremitting zeal and fidelity, no small thing in a country when the allegiance of servants is so commonly bought and sold. In his youth it was he who walked and ran beside her chair as body servant; through what scenes of splendour and squalor had they both passed since then, and now he was left alone, surrounded by new faces and confronted by imminent peril of change. Yet in spite of his long life and the enervating

[1] Tzŭ Hsi was fond of masquerading with her favourite, till well advanced in years. One photograph of her is on sale in Peking, wherein she is posing as the Goddess of Mercy (Kuanyin) with Li in attendance as one of the Boddhisatvas.

influences of his profession, the old man's powerful physique was by no means exhausted.

Too wise to follow in the footsteps of his unfortunate predecessor, Li never made raids on his own account into the provinces, nor did he ever attempt to gain or claim high official rank remaining prudently content with the fourth class button, which is the highest grade to which eunuchs may legally aspire. But, under the protection and with the full knowledge of the Empress Dowager, he organised a regular system of *corvées,* squeezes and *douceurs*, levied on every high official in the Empire, the proceeds of which he frequently shared with the Old Buddha herself. As shown in another place, the Empress and her Chief Eunuch practically made common cause and a common purse in collecting "tribute" and squeezes during the wanderings of the Court in exile after 1900. At that time the Chief Eunuch, less fortunate than his mistress, had lost the whole of his buried treasure in the capital. It had been "*cached*" in a safe place, known only to his intimate subordinates, but one of these sold the secret to the French troops, who raided the hoard, a rich booty. One of Li's first steps after the Court's return was to obtain the Old Buddha's permission to have the traitor beheaded, which was done without undue formalities. The Chief Eunuch's fortune was estimated by Peking bankers in 1910 at about two millions sterling, invested chiefly in pawn-shops and money-changing establishments at the capital; this sum represents roughly his share of the provincial tribute and squeezes on official appointments since 1900, and the total is not surprising when we bear in mind that the price of one official post has been known to bring him in as much as three hundred and twenty thousand taels, or say forty thousand pounds.

One of the secrets of his wealth was that he never despised the day of small things. The following is the text of a letter in our possession (of which we reproduce a facsimile), written by him to one of the regular contractors of the Palace, with whom he must have had many similar transactions. The paper on which it is written is of the

commonest, and the visiting card which, as usual, accompanies it, is that of an unpretentious business man; the style of the writer is terse and to the point:—

"To my worthy friend, Mr. Wang, the Seventh (of his family):—

"Since I last had the pleasure of seeing you, you have been constantly in my thoughts. I wish you, with all respect, long life and prosperity: thus will your days fulfil my best hopes of you. And now I beg politely to tell you that I, your younger brother,[1] am quite ashamed of the emptiness of my purse and I therefore beg that you, good Sir, will be so good as to lend me notes to the amount of fifteen hundred taels, which sum kindly hand to the bearer of this letter. I look forward to a day for our further conversation,

"Your younger brother,
"LI LIEN-YING."

As to the amount, Li knew exactly how much the contractors and furnishers of the Palace should pay on every occasion, and that there was no need to question the possibility of the "loan" not being forthcoming.

That he encouraged lavish expenditure at the Court is certain, and scarcely a matter for wonder, but his control of finance extended far beyond the Privy Purse, and wrought great harm to the Empire on more than one historic occasion. For instance, China's humiliating defeat at the hands of Japan in 1894 was very largely due to his diversion of vast sums of money from the Navy to the reconstruction and decoration of the Summer Palace, a work from which he and his underlings profited to no small extent. In 1885, Prince Ch'un had been appointed head of the Admiralty Board, assisted by Prince Ch'ing, Li Hung-chang and the Marquis Tsêng. After the death of the Marquis, however (who had been a moving spirit in the organisation of the Board), Naval affairs passed into the control of a clique of young and inexperienced Princes, and when, in 1889, the Emperor assumed the direction of the Government, one of his first acts was to order the re-building of the Summer Palace, which Imperial

[1] A term of humility.

residence had remained in ruins since its destruction by the Allies in 1861. There being no funds available, Li advised that the Naval appropriations should be devoted to this purpose, so that the Old Buddha might be suitably provided with a residence; this was accordingly done, and the Naval Department became a branch of the Imperial Household (Nei Wu Fu) for all purposes of Government finance. When the war with Japan broke out, the Empress Dowager issued orders that the Naval Department should be abolished. This order evoked very general criticism, but, as the Department and the Summer Palace rebuilding fund had come to be treated as one and the same account, her Decree simply meant that as the Palace restoration was now complete, and as the funds were quite exhausted, the account in question might be considered closed. There was obviously nothing to be gained by useless enquiries for money to be transferred from the Palace to the Navy.

In 1889 the Chief Eunuch accompanied Prince Ch'un on his first tour of inspection to the northern Naval ports, including the Naval bases of Port Arthur and Weihaiwei. It was a matter of very general comment at the time that the honours paid to the eunuch were noticeably greater than those shown to the Prince. Every officer in the Peiyang squadron, from Admiral Ting downwards, did his best to ingratiate himself with this powerful Chamberlain, and to become enrolled on the list of his *protégés,* so that he was *entouré* with all manner of bribery and adulation. Many critics, foreign and Chinese, have cast on Li Hung-chang the blame for the disasters of the Japanese war, but they surely overlook the fact, to which even the great Viceroy dared not openly refer, that nine-tenths of the funds which should have gone to the upkeep and provisioning of the Navy and the maintenance of the Coast Defences, had been diverted by the Chief Eunuch to the Palace (and much of them to his own pocket), so that the ships' crews were disaffected, and their ordnance defective, in the hour of need. Readers of Pepys will remember a very similar state of affairs obtaining in the British Navy, happily

without affecting the *morale* of its officers and men, at a similarly critical period of British history.

Li Lien-ying's hatred of the Emperor Kuang-Hsü was beyond doubt a most important factor in the *coup d'état*, and in the subsequent estrangement and hostility between Tzŭ Hsi and the nominal ruler of the Empire; there are not lacking those who say that it had much to do with the Emperor's death, which certainly created no surprise in the capital. The eunuch hated and feared the Emperor's reforming zeal, as well as the Cantonese advisers who in 1898 came swarming to Peking as the apostles of a new dispensation, and it was therefore only natural that he should become the foremost adviser and partisan of the reactionaries and their emissary in urging the Empress to resume control of affairs. It is quite safe to assert that had his great influence with Tzŭ Hsi been exercised against, instead of for, the Boxers, had he abstained from encouraging her superstitious belief in their magic arts, the anti-foreign movement would never have gone further than the borders of Shantung, and the Chinese people would have been spared the heavy burden of the indemnities. How interesting a study of Asiatic politics and Court life presents itself in the spectacle of this cobbler's apprentice and his influence on the destinies of so great a race! Seeing him as he was on the day of his mistress's burial, how bitter must have been the innermost thoughts of the man, left alone on the brink of the grave, with the ill-gotten wealth that his country has paid for so heavily!

At the height of the Boxer crisis when the power wielded by Li Lien-ying was enormous, it was the custom of Prince Tuan, when explaining his views to the Empress Dowager and the Grand Council, to emphasise the fact that no step had been taken except with the advice and approval of the Chief Eunuch. "Such and such a Decree," he would say, "is issued with the Chief Chamberlain Li's approval." His object in so doing was to head off opposition, for he well knew that few would dare to oppose any measures that the Chief Eunuch approved. When Her Majesty granted rewards to the Boxers and offered head-

money to the troops for the killing of Europeans, it was at Li's urgent request that she consented to defray these unusual charges from her Privy Purse.

When the relieving forces drew near to Peking and it became clear, even to the most obstinate, that the Boxer bolt was shot, the Chief Eunuch passed through a period of deep depression and mortification, not only because of the failure of his prophecies, but because it was clear to all at Court that his Imperial mistress, seeking, as was her wont, a scapegoat, was disposed to vent her wrath upon him. Herself deeply stirred by fear and wrath, it was only natural that she should turn on him, who had been foremost in advising her to follow the path of destruction. On the day when the relief of the Legations took place, Duke Lan rushed headlong into the Palace, loudly announcing that the foreign devils were already within the city walls. Tzŭ Hsi turned on him and asked how he could reconcile such a statement with his previous boasts. "I presume that the devils have flown here," said she, "for you were telling me only two days ago of our glorious victories near Tientsin; and yet all the time you knew well, as I knew, that the Viceroy and Li Ping-heng were both dead." Li Lien-ying, who was standing close by, hearing this, went out and informed the trembling crowd of eunuchs, adding, "The Old Buddha is in an unspeakable rage. There is nothing for it; we must make our escape and retire into Shensi. There we will await the arrival of our reinforcements which will easily drive all these devils back into the sea." But the hardships and dangers of the flight told even more severely on the Chief Eunuch than on the Old Buddha herself, and it was not until the Court's safe establishment at Hsi-an that he recovered his self-possession.

Certain information conveyed by an official of the Household in exile to a fellow provincial at Peking, throws considerable light on the manner in which the Court lived during those troublous days, and the part played in affairs of State by the Chief Eunuch and Tzŭ Hsi's other favourites of the Household. We take the following disconnected notes from this correspondence.

When Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan (Governor of Shensi) came to meet the court on the Shansi frontier, the Old Buddha, raising the curtain of her sedan-chair, looked out and said to him, "Have you any idea of what we have suffered in Peking?" "I do not know all," he replied. Pointing angrily at Li, she said, "It was all his doing; he has brought ruin upon me." The Chief Eunuch hung his head, and for once had nothing to say. Later on, when the fearless Ts'en saw the eunuchs under Li's orders mercilessly harassing the countryside in their search for plunder, he promptly reported matters to the Empress and obtained her somewhat reluctant permission to execute three of the offenders on the spot. He was sorely tempted to include the Chief Eunuch in the number of his victims, but realising how greatly Her Majesty depended upon her favourite attendant, he feared to run the risk of inconveniencing and offending her. Nevertheless, Li had a narrow escape. Later on, when Li had recovered his equanimity, and the Court had settled down to its usual routine, the eunuch revenged himself on the Governor, with the help of Jung Lu, by having him transferred to the Governorship of Shansi. He did this, not only because the post in Shansi was considered a dangerous one, owing to the fear of pursuit by the Allies, but because Ts'en had gradually made himself most useful to Her Majesty by superintending the expenditure of her Household. The Governor was justly famous throughout the Empire for his incorruptible honesty, so that, when placed in charge of the Palace accounts, these speedily showed a very considerable reduction in expenditure. The first result of this *régime* was to put a stop to all the "squeeze" of the eunuchs, and to place their salaries upon a definite and moderate basis. Ts'en rapidly attained an intimate and confidential position with Her Majesty, to the great and increasing wrath of the Chief Eunuch, who left no stone unturned to injure him, and eventually succeeded, with the help of Jung Lu, in inducing Her Majesty to dispense with his personal services. For over a month, however, the Old Buddha spent hours daily discussing public and private affairs with

this fearless and upright official, and it would have been well for her had she retained him and others of his quality about her to counteract the corrupt tendencies of her Manchu clansmen and the eunuchs. After Ts'en's transfer to Shansi, the Chief Eunuch did not scruple to suppress and destroy many of the memorials which as Governor he addressed to the Old Buddha, and which Li did not desire his mistress to see. Gradually he re-established himself as completely as before in the confidence and favour of his mistress, and before the Court's return to Peking he had become if anything more familiarly arrogant than at any previous stage in his career. At audiences given to the highest officials he would even go so far as to refuse to transmit Her Majesty's orders, bluntly informing her that he was tired and that there had been enough public business for that day!

The vast quantities of tribute levied by the Court from the Southern Provinces at this time were handled in the first instance by Li Lien-ying, whose apartments were stacked with heaps of dragon robes, tribute silk and other valuables. Of all the tribute paid in bullion, the Empress Dowager's share was one-half, while the eunuchs divided one-fifth, and the balance was handed over to Jung Lu for military purposes and his own emolument. So profitable was the eunuchs' business at Hsi-an and Kai-feng, that Li Lien-ying did his utmost to dissuade the Old Buddha from returning to Peking, endeavouring to frighten her by alarming prognostications of the vengeance of the foreign Powers. Li's motives were not entirely mercenary, however, for there is no doubt that for a long time he fully expected to find his own name on the "black list" of the Legations, and that it fully deserved to figure there. He directed the second eunuch, named Ts'ui, to communicate to him daily the latest news from Peking, and it was only when reassured by reports from Prince Ch'ing, that his courage returned, and his opposition to the Court's return ceased. The conciliatory attitude, which he eventually adopted towards the Empress Dowager's reform policy, was largely induced by the good advice which he received

from Jung Lu, who strongly urged him to control his reactionary opinions and violent temper.

The amount of tribute paid in silver to the Court at Hsi-an was over five million taels, the quota from each Province being kept separate. The Chief Eunuch was assisted in the supervision of the tribute accounts by another favourite of the Old Buddha, a eunuch named Sun, whose covetousness and bullying methods of "squeeze" were almost equal to those of his chief. On one occasion the deputy in charge of the tribute from Hupei was paying in bullion to the Imperial Household, and Sun was tallying the amounts with a steelyard. He said there was a shortage. "That cannot be so," said the deputy, "for every shoe of Hupei silver weighs fifty taels exactly, so that there can be no mistake." The eunuch looked at him insolently, and said, "How many times have you brought tribute, and what do you know about the customs of the Court?" The frightened deputy persisted that all was in order. Sun then said angrily: "I suppose, then, you mean that the Old Buddha's scales are false?" He was just proceeding to assault the unfortunate deputy, when the Old Buddha herself, overhearing the argument (the courtyards of her residence being very small) came out and directed the eunuch to bring the silver into her own apartments, where she would weigh it herself. "I believe there has been a great deal of leakage lately," she said; "it is the business of my eunuchs to see that I am not cheated." The deputy took his departure, looking extremely crestfallen, but on his way out he was met by Chi Lu, the Controller of the Household, who said to him, "We all know you have been having a bad time of it, but you must not mind. These eunuchs have been making very little money of late, for the Old Buddha has been keeping a very sharp watch on them; you must therefore excuse them. And they have lost a great deal in Peking."

Tribute of twenty-four kinds was received from Canton, but the eunuchs on their own initiative, and in order to compel *largesse*, rejected nine different kinds of articles, so that the official in charge was greatly alarmed, fearing that

the Old Buddha would accuse him of having stolen the things which the eunuchs refused to receive. This was one of their commonest methods of levying tribute on their own account; another was to make large purchases in the name of the Empress, and refuse to pay for them. Much hardship was inflicted on the people of Hsi-an, and indeed of the entire province, from their depredations, especially because at the time Shensi was already suffering from the beginnings of famine, caused by the prolonged drought. It is recorded in the accounts of the Governor Ts'en, that flour cost 96 cash a pound, eggs 34 cash apiece, and pork 400 cash a pound, while fish was almost unobtainable; these prices being about six times as high as those ruling in Southern China.

Many of the eunuchs appeared to take pleasure in humiliating the Emperor, and subjecting him to petty annoyances, which often roused him to petulant outbursts of temper. In one letter from the Court at Hsi-an it was reported that His Majesty appeared to be a little wrong in the head, for he would spend his time playing foolish games, such as hide-and-seek, with the younger eunuchs, until interrupted by the Empress Dowager, when he would immediately get into a corner and assume a sullen demeanour. At other times, when irritated, he would give way to violent fits of rage and throw the household crockery at the heads of his attendants. These reports must be received with caution, as they were frequently spread abroad by the Chief Eunuch and members of the reactionary party in order to damage His Majesty in the eyes of the outside world.

As above stated, after the return of the Court from its journeying in the wilderness (1902) Li's influence with the Empress Dowager was, if anything, greater than before, all the internal affairs of the Palace being under his supreme control. Following Her Majesty's example however, he professed his complete conversion to the necessity of reform, and even gave his approval, after certain amendments had been made by the Grand Council and by himself, to her programme for the granting of a Constitution.

Jesting with Her Majesty in his usual familiar manner, he was heard on more than one occasion to predict her conversion to Christianity. "We are only sham devils now, Old Buddha," he said.

Nevertheless, and in spite of advancing years and infirmity, he continued to cling tenaciously to the perquisites and privileges of his stewardship, fiercely defending the eunuch system and his own post by all the means (and they were many) in his power. When, in 1901, T'ao Mo, late Viceroy of Canton, sent in his famous Memorial urging that, in view of the greatly reduced number of the Imperial concubines, the eunuchs should be replaced by female attendants, Li successfully intrigued to prevent this document reaching Her Majesty until he had taken effective steps to prevent her being advised in favour of the suggestion.

Since that day, there were repeated denunciations of the eunuch system, and rumours of their impending removal, but their influence showed little sign of diminution, and officials of the courage and integrity of T'ao Mo were a small minority in the Mandarinate. Reform measures on paper are numerous enough, measures forecasting self-denial and zeal for the common good at some future and undetermined date, but it was significant of the condition of affairs and the strong hold of the powers of reaction, that the native Press passed from its former robust independence under complete official control, and that the voice of Young China, which formerly denounced the eunuchs and other causes of national degeneration, was but faintly heard in the land.

VI

MAJORITY AND DEATH OF THE EMPEROR T'UNG-CHIH

In the eleventh year of T'ung-Chih (November 1872) the Empresses Dowager, as Co-Regents, issued a Decree recounting the circumstances which had led to the Regency (which they once more described as having been thrust upon them), and announced the fact that His Majesty's education having been completed, they now proposed to hand over to him the reigns of government; they therefore directed that the Court of Astronomers should select an auspicious day upon which His Majesty should assume control. The astrologers and soothsayers having announced that the 26th day of the 1st Moon was of fortunate omen (wherein, as far as the Emperor was concerned, they lied), the Co-Regents issued on that day the last Decree of their first Regency, which is worth reproducing:—

"His Majesty assumes to-day the control of the Government, and our joy at this auspicious event is in some degree blended with feelings of anxiety as to the possible results of this change; but we bear in mind the fact that his sacred Ancestors have all feared the Almighty, and endeavoured to follow in the sacred traditions of their predecessors. At the moment, peace has not been completely restored throughout the Empire, for rebellion is still rife in Yünnan, Shensi and the North-West region. It behoves the Emperor to bear steadily in mind the greatness of the task which God and his ancestors have laid upon him alone, and carefully to obey the House laws of the Dynasty in all things. When not actually engaged on business of State, he should employ his time in studying the classics and the precedents of history, carefully enquiring into the causes which have produced good or bad government, from the earliest times down to the present day. He should be thrifty and diligent, endeavouring to make perfect his government. This has been our one constant endeavour since we took upon ourselves the Regency, the one ideal that has been steadily before our eyes."

The Decree concludes with the usual exhortation to the Grand Council and the high officers of the Provincial administration, to serve the Throne with zeal and loyalty.

As far as the Emperor was concerned, these admirable sentiments appeared to have little or no effect, for his conduct from the outset was undutiful, not to say disrespectful, to his mother. Nor was this to be wondered at, when we remember that since his early boyhood he had shown a marked preference for the Empress Dowager of the East (Tzŭ An) and that he was well aware of the many dissensions and intrigues rife in the Palace generally, and particularly between the Co-Regents. He had now attained his seventeenth year, and, with it, something of the autocratic and imperious nature of his august parent. He was encouraged in his independent attitude by the wife whom Tzŭ Hsi had chosen for him, the virtuous A-lu-te. This lady was of patrician origin, being a daughter of the assistant Imperial tutor, Ch'ung Ch'i. In the first flush of supreme authority, the boy Emperor and his young wife would appear to have completely ignored the danger of their position, but they were speedily to learn by bitter experience that Tzŭ Hsi was not to be opposed, and that to live peacefully with her in the Palace was an end that could only be attained by complete submission to her will. The first trouble arose from the Emperor's refusal to submit State documents for his mother's inspection, but there were soon other and more serious causes of friction. But above and behind all lay the ominous fact that, in the event of an heir being born to the Emperor, A-lu-te would from that day become Empress mother, and in the event of the Emperor's subsequent decease, to her would belong by right the title of Empress Dowager, so that, come what might, Tzŭ Hsi would be relegated to a position of obscurity and insignificant authority. It is impossible to overlook this fact in forming our opinion of subsequent events, and especially of the motives which actuated the Empress Dowager when, after the death of T'ung-Chih, she insisted on the election of another infant Emperor at all costs and in violation of the sacred laws of

Dynastic succession. Apart from her inability to brook any form of opposition and her absolutely unscrupulous methods for ridding herself of anything or anyone who stood in the path of her ambition, no impartial estimate of her action at this period can deny the fact that it was entirely to her interest that the Emperor T'ung-Chih should not have an heir, and that his Consort should follow him speedily, in the event of his "mounting the Dragon chariot, and proceeding on the long journey." All commentators agree that Tzŭ Hsi encouraged the youthful Emperor's tendencies to dissipated habits, and that, when these had resulted in a serious illness, she allowed it to wreck havoc with his delicate constitution, without providing him with such medical assistance as might have been available. One of the members of the Imperial Household, by name Kuei Ching,[1] deploring the Emperor's licentious habits and foreseeing his early death, took occasion to urge that the deplorable influence exercised over him by disreputable eunuchs should be removed, and that greater care should be taken of his manners, morals and health. He even went so far, in his zeal, as to decapitate several of the offending eunuchs, but in so doing he incurred not only the displeasure of the Empress Dowager, but of the Emperor himself, who desired neither criticism nor assistance from anyone around him. The unfortunate Kuei Ching was therefore compelled to resign his post, and to leave the Emperor to his fate. His colleagues, the Ministers of the Household, Wen Hsi and Kuei Pao, men of a very different stamp, and open partisans of the Empress Dowager, not only did nothing to restrain the Emperor from his vicious courses, but actually encouraged him, so that it became a matter of common knowledge and notorious in the capital that they and the Emperor together were wont to consort with all the evil characters in the worst localities of the Southern City. It became cause for scandal in the Palace itself that His Majesty would return from his orgies long after the hour fixed for the morning

[1] This Kuei Ching was an uncle of Tuan Fang, late Viceroy of Chihli and a man generally respected.

audience with his high officers of State. He was mixed up in many a drunken brawl and consorted with the lowest dregs of the Chinese city, so that it was no matter for surprise when he contracted the germs of disease which speedily led to his death. Already in 1873 it was apparent that the Dragon Throne would soon be vacant. In December 1874, he contracted smallpox and during his illness the Empresses Dowager were called upon to assume control of the Government. Towards the end of the month, he issued the following Decree.

"We have had the good fortune[1] this month to contract smallpox, and their Majesties, the Empresses Dowager, have shown the greatest possible tenderness in the care for our person. They have also consented to peruse all Memorials and State papers on our behalf, and to carry on the business of the State, for which we are deeply grateful. We feel bound to confer upon their Majesties additional titles of honour, so as to make some return, however small, for their infinite goodness."

The Emperor's enfeebled constitution was unable to resist the ravages of his combined diseases, and his physical condition became in the highest degree deplorable; at 8 p.m. on the 13th January 1875, in the presence of the Empresses Dowager and some twenty Princes and Ministers of the Household, he "ascended the Dragon" and was wafted on high. Amongst those present at his death-bed were the Princes Kung and Ch'un, as well as Tzŭ Hsi's devoted henchman and admirer Jung Lu. After the Emperor's death, a Censor, bolder than his fellows, impeached the two Ministers of the Household who had openly encouraged the Emperor in his dissipated courses, and Tzŭ Hsi, having no further use for their services, dismissed them from office. As further proof of her virtuous admiration for faithful service and disinterested conduct, she invited Kuei Ching to resume his appointment, praising his loyalty; but he declined the invitation, having by this time formed his own opinion of the value of virtue in Her Majesty's service.

[1] This disease is regarded amongst the Chinese as one of good omen, especially if the symptoms develop satisfactorily.

The Emperor having died without issue, all would have been plain and meritorious sailing for Tzŭ Hsi and her retention of supreme power, had it not been for the unpleasant fact, known to all the Court, that the Emperor's consort, A-lu-te, was *enceinte* and therefore might confer an heir on the deceased sovereign. In the event of a son being born, it was clear that both A-lu-te and Tzŭ An would *ipso facto* acquire authority theoretically higher than her own, since her title of Empress Mother had lapsed by the death of T'ung-Chih, and her original position was only that of a secondary consort. As the mother of the Emperor, she had by right occupied a predominant position during his minority, but this was now ended. It was to her motherhood that she had owed the first claims to power; now she had nothing but her own boundless ambition, courage and intelligence to take the place of lawful claims and natural ties. With the death of her son the Emperor, and the near prospect of A-lu-te's confinement, it was clear that her own position would require desperate remedies, if her power was to remain undiminished.

Among the senior members of the Imperial Clan, many of whom were jealous of the influence of the Yehonala branch, there was a strong movement in favour of placing on the Throne a grandson of the eldest son of the venerated Emperor Tao-Kuang, namely, the infant Prince P'u Lun, whose claims were excellent, in so far as he was of a generation lower than the deceased T'ung-Chih, but complicated by the fact that his father had been adopted into the direct line from another branch. The Princes and nobles who favoured this choice pointed out that the infant P'u Lun was almost the only nominee who would satisfy the laws of succession and allow of the proper sacrifices being performed to the spirit of the deceased T'ung-Chih.[1]

Tzŭ Hsi, however, was too determined to retain her position and power to allow any weight to attach to senti-

[1] The annual and seasonal sacrifices at the ancestral Temple and at the Imperial tombs involve "kotowing" before each tablet of the sacred ancestors, and this cannot be done in the presence of one of the same generation as the last deceased, much less by him.

mental, religious, or other considerations. If, in order to secure her objects, a violation of the ancestral and House-laws were necessary, she was not the woman to hesitate, and she trusted to her own intelligence and the servility of her tools in the Censorate to put matters right, or, at least, to overcome all opposition. At this period she was on bad terms with her colleague and Co-Regent, whom she had never forgiven for her share in the decapitation of her Chief Eunuch, An Te-hai; she hated and mistrusted Prince Kung, and there is hardly a doubt that she had resolved to get rid of the young Empress A-lu-te before the birth of her child. The only member of the Imperial family with whom she was at this time on intimate terms was her brother-in-law, Prince Ch'un, the seventh son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang. This Prince, an able man, though dissolute in his habits, had married her favourite sister, the younger Yehonala, and it will, therefore, be readily understood that the reasons which actuated her in deciding to place this Prince's infant son upon the Throne were of the very strongest. During his minority she would continue to rule the Empire, and, should he live to come of age, her sister, the Emperor's mother, might be expected to exert her influence to keep him in the path of dutiful obedience. Tzŭ Hsi's objection to the son of Prince Kung was partly due to the fact that she had never forgiven his father for his share in the death of the eunuch, An Te-hai, and other offences, and partly because the young Prince was now in his seventeenth year, and would, therefore, almost immediately have assumed the Government in his own person. Tzŭ Hsi was aware that, in that event, it would be in accordance with tradition and the methods adopted by the stronger party in the Forbidden City for ridding itself of inconvenient rivals and conflicting authorities, that either she should be relegated to complete obscurity here below, or forcibly assisted on the road to Heaven. It was thus absolutely necessary for her to put a stop to this appointment, and, as usual, she acted with prompt thoroughness, which speedily triumphed over the disorganised efforts of her opponents. By adroit intrigues,

exercised chiefly through her favourite eunuch, she headed off any attempt to co-operation between the supporters of Prince P'u Lun and those of Prince Kung, while, with the aid of Jung Lu and the appearance on the scene of a considerable force of Li Hung-chang's Anhui troops, she prepared the way for the success of her own plans; her preparations made, she summoned a Council of the Clansmen and high officials, to elect and appoint the new Emperor.

This solemn conclave took place in the Palace of "Mind Nurture," on the western side of the Forbidden City, about a quarter of a mile distant from the palace in which the Emperor T'ung-Chih had expired. In addition to the Empresses Regent, those present numbered twenty-five in all, including several Princes and Imperial Clansmen, the members of the Grand Council, and several of the highest metropolitan officials; but of all these, only five were Chinese. Prince Tsai Chih, the father of Prince P'u Lun, was there, as well as Prince Kung, both representing the proposed legitimate claims to the Throne. The approaches to the Palace were thronged with eunuchs, and Tzŭ Hsi had taken care, with the assistance of Jung Lu, that all the strategical points in the Forbidden City should be held by troops on whose loyalty she could completely depend. Amongst them were many of Jung Lu's own Banner Corps, as well as detachments chiefly composed of members and adherents of the Yehonala clan. By Tzŭ Hsi's express orders, the newly-widowed Empress A-lu-te was excluded from the Council meeting, and remained dutifully weeping by the bedside of her departed lord, who had already been arrayed in the ceremonial Dragon robes.

In the Council Chamber Tzŭ Hsi and her colleague sat opposite to each other on Thrones; all the officials present were on their knees. Taking precedence as usual, and assuming as of right the *rôle* of chief speaker, Tzŭ Hsi began by remarking that no time must be lost in selecting the new Emperor; it was not fitting that the Throne should remain vacant on the assumption that an heir would be born to His late Majesty. Prince Kung ventured to dis-

agree with this opinion, expressing the view that, as A-lu-te's child would shortly be born, there should be no difficulty in keeping back the news of the Emperor's death for a little while; the child, if a boy, could then rightly and fittingly be placed on the Throne, while in the event of the posthumous child being a daughter, there would still be time enough to make selection of the Emperor's successor. The Princes and Clansmen appeared to side with this view, but Tzŭ Hsi brushed it aside, observing that there were still rebellions unsuppressed in the south, and that if it were known that the Throne was empty, the Dynasty might very well be overthrown. "When the nest is destroyed, how many eggs will remain unbroken?" she asked. The Grand Councillors and several senior statesmen, including the three Chinese representatives from the south, expressed agreement with this view, for they realised that, given conditions of unrest, the recently active Taiping rebels might very easily renew the anti-Dynastic movement.

The Empress Dowager of the East then gave it as her opinion that Prince Kung's son should be chosen heir to the Throne; Prince Kung, in accordance with the customary etiquette, kotowed and professed unwillingness that such honour should fall to his family, and suggested that the youthful Prince P'u Lun should be elected. P'u Lun's father in turn pleaded the unworthiness of his offspring, not because he really felt any qualms on the subject, but because custom necessitated this self-denying attitude. "That has nothing to do with the case," said Tzŭ Hsi to the last speaker, "but as you are only the adopted son of Yi Wei" (the eldest son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang) "what precedent can any of you show for placing on the Throne the heir of an adopted son?" Prince Kung, called upon to reply, hesitated, and suggested as a suitable precedent the case of a Ming Emperor of the fifteenth century canonised as Ying-Tsung. "That is a bad precedent," replied the Empress, who had every instance of history at her finger ends. "The Emperor Ying-Tsung was not really the son of his predecessor, but was palmed off on the

Emperor by one of the Imperial concubines. His reign was a period of disaster; he was for a time in captivity under the Mongols and afterwards lived in retirement at Peking for eight years while the Throne was occupied by his brother." Turning next to her colleague she said, "As for me, I propose as heir to the Throne, Tsai Tien, the son of Yi Huan (Prince Ch'un), and advise you all that we lose no time." On hearing these words Prince Kung turned to his brother and angrily remarked: "Is the right of primogeniture [1] to be completely ignored?" "Let the matter then be decided by taking a vote," said Tzŭ Hsi, and her colleague offered no objections. The result of the vote was that seven of the Princes, led by Prince Ch'un, voted for Prince P'u Lun, and three for the son of Prince Kung; the remainder of the Council voted solidly for Tzŭ Hsi's nominee. The voting was done openly and the result was entirely due to the strong will and dominating personality of the woman whom all had for years recognised as the real ruler of China. When the voting was concluded, Tzŭ An, who was always more anxious for an amicable settlement than for prolonged discussion, intimated her willingness to leave all further arrangements in the hands of her colleague. It was now past nine o'clock, a furious dust-storm was raging and the night was bitterly cold, but Tzŭ Hsi, who never wasted time at moments of crisis, ordered a strong detachment of Household troops to be sent to the residence of Prince Ch'un in the Western City, and with it the Imperial yellow sedan chair with eight bearers, to bring the boy Emperor to the Palace. At the same time, to keep Prince Kung busy and out of harm's way, she gave him charge of the body of the dead Emperor, while she had the Palace surrounded and strongly guarded by Jung Lu's troops. It was in her careful attention to details of this kind that lay her marked superiority to the vacillating and unbusinesslike methods of those who opposed her, and it is this Napoleonic characteristic of the woman which explains much of the success

[1] Prince Kung was the sixth, Prince Ch'un the seventh, in order of seniority.

that her own people frequently attributed to luck. Before midnight the little Emperor had been duly installed in the Palace, weeping bitterly upon his ill-omened coming to the Forbidden City. With him came his mother (Tzŭ Hsi's sister) and several nurses. The first event of his reign, imposed upon him, like much future misery, by dynastic precedent, was to be taken at once to the Hall where his deceased predecessor was lying in State, and there to "ko-tow," as well as his tender years permitted, before the departed ruler. A Decree was thereupon issued in the names of the Empresses Dowager, who thus became once more Regents, announcing, "that they were absolutely compelled to select Tsai Tien for the Throne, and that he should become heir by adoption to his uncle Hsien-Feng, but that, so soon as he should have begotten a son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih would at once be provided with an heir."

By this means the widowed Empress A-lu-te was completely passed over, and the claims of her posthumous son ignored in advance. Once more Tzŭ Hsi had gained an easy and complete victory. It was clear to those who left the Council Chamber after the issue of this Decree, that neither the young widowed Empress nor the unborn child of T'ung-Chih were likely to give much more trouble.

For form's sake, and in accordance with dynastic precedents, a Memorial was submitted by all the Ministers and Princes of the Household, begging their Majesties the Empresses to resume the Regency, who, on their part, went through the farce of acceding graciously to this request, on the time-honoured ground that during the Emperor's minority there must be some central authority to whom the officials of the Empire might look for the necessary guidance. It was only fitting and proper, however, that reluctance should be displayed, and Tzŭ Hsi's reply to the Memorial therefore observed that "the perusal of this Memorial has greatly increased our grief and sorrowful recognition of the exigencies of the times, for we had hoped that the Regency was merely a temporary

measure of unusual expediency. Be it known that so soon as the Emperor shall have completed his education, we shall immediately hand over to him the affairs of the Government."

The infant Emperor was understood to express "dutiful thanks to their Majesties for this virtuous act" and all the formalities of the tragic comedy were thus completed. The Empress Dowager gave orders that the repairs which had been begun at the Lake and Summer Palaces should now be stopped, the reason given being that the Empresses Regent would have no time nor desire for gaiety in the years to come; the real reason being, however, that the death of the Emperor removed all necessity for their Majesties leaving the Forbidden City.

Tzŭ Hsi's success in forcing her wishes upon the Grand Council and having her sister's infant son appointed to the Imperial succession, in opposition to the wishes of a powerful party and in violation of the dynastic law, was entirely due to her energy and influence. The charm of her personality, and the convincing directness of her methods were more effective than all the forces of tradition. This fact, and her triumph, become the more remarkable when we bear in mind that she had been advised, and the Grand Council was aware, that the infant Emperor suffered from physical weaknesses which, even at that date, rendered it extremely unlikely that he would ever provide an heir to the Throne. Those who criticised her selection, knowing this, would have been therefore in a strong position had they not been lacking in courage and decision, since it was clear, if the fact were admitted, that Her Majesty's only possible motive was personal ambition.

From that time until the death of the Emperor and her own, on the 14th and 15th November 1908, the belief was widespread, and not infrequently expressed, that the Emperor, whose reign began thus inauspiciously, would not survive her, and there were many who predicted that his death would occur before the time came for him to assume supreme control of the Government. All foretold that Tzŭ Hsi would survive him, for the simple reason that only thus

could she hope to regulate once more the succession and continue the Regency. The prophets of evil were wrong, as we know, inasmuch as Kuang-Hsü was allowed his years of grace in control of affairs, but we know also that after the *coup d'état* it was only the fear of an insurrection in the south that saved his life and prevented the accession of a new boy Emperor.

The designation of the new reign was then ordered to be "Kuang-Hsü," meaning "glorious succession"; it was chosen to emphasise the fact that the new Emperor was a direct lineal descendant of the last great Manchu Emperor, Tao-Kuang, and to suggest the hope that the evil days of Hsien-Feng and T'ung-Chih had come to an end. The next act of the Empresses Regent was to confer an honorific title upon the late Emperor's widow; but the honour was not sufficient to prevent her from committing suicide on the 27th of March as an act of protest at the grievous wrong done to her, to the memory of her husband and to the claims of his posthumous heir. This was the unofficial explanation current, but opinions have always differed, and must continue to differ, as to the truth of the suicide, there being many who, not unnaturally, accused Tzŭ Hsi of putting an end to the unfortunate woman. Against this the Empress's advocates observe that, having succeeded in obtaining the appointment of Kuang-Hsü to the Throne, and the matter being irrevocably settled, there existed no further necessity for any act of violence: but few, if any, suggest that had circumstances necessitated violent measures they would not have been taken. The balance of evidence is undoubtedly in the direction of foul play. But, however administered, it is certain that the death of the Empress A-lu-te influenced public opinion more profoundly than she could ever have done by living; as a result, thousands of Memorials poured in from the Censorate and the provinces, strongly protesting against the selection of the infant son of Prince Ch'un for the Throne, as a violation of all ancestral custom and the time-honoured laws of succession. It is significant that all these protests were clearly directed against Tzŭ Hsi, her col-

league's nonentity being practically and generally recognised. For a time Tzŭ Hsi's popularity (and therefore the position of the Yehonala clan) was seriously affected, and when, four years later, the Censor, Wu K'o-tu, committed suicide near T'ung-Chih's grave to emphasise the seriousness of the crime and to focus public attention on the matter, the Empress was compelled to bow to the storm and to give a second and more solemn pledge that the deceased Emperor should not permanently be left without heirs to perform for him the sacrifices of ancestral worship. It will be seen hereafter how she kept that pledge.

Prince Ch'un, in the capacity of father to the new Emperor, submitted a Memorial asking leave to be permitted to resign his various offices, because, as an official, he would be bound to "kotow" to the Emperor, and as a father he could not "kotow" to his own son. In the cause of this Memorial, which reminds the reader unpleasantly of Mr. Pecksniff, the Prince observes that when first informed of his son's selection as heir to the Dragon Throne, "he almost fainted and knew not what to do. When borne to his home, his body was trembling and his heart palpitating severely; like a madman, or one who walks in dreams, was he, so that he incurred a serious recurrence of his liver trouble and the state of his health became really a matter for anxiety. He would prefer that the silent tomb should close forthwith over his remains rather than to continue to draw the breath of life as the useless son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang."

The Empress Dowager, in reply, directed her faithful Ministers to devise a careful compromise "based on the special requirements of the case," the result of which was that Prince Ch'un was permitted to resign his offices and excused from attendance at all Court ceremonies involving obeisance to the Emperor, but was retained in a sort of general capacity as "adviser to the Empresses Regent" to serve when called upon. On the birthdays of the Empresses Regent, he would be permitted to prostrate himself before them in private, and not as a member of the Court in attendance on the Emperor. His first class Princedom

was made hereditary for ever, and he was commanded to give the benefit of his experience and sage counsel to his successor, Prince Tun, as officer commanding the Manchu Field Force—an order which he must have obeyed, for the Force in question became more and more notorious for its tatterdemalion uselessness and the corruption of its commanders.

Remembering the institution of the first Regency, it will be noted how faithfully history here repeats itself.

VII

THE PROTEST AND SUICIDE OF WU K'O-TU

IMMEDIATELY after the death of T'ung-Chih's young widow, the validity of the Imperial succession and the violation of all traditions which Tzŭ Hsi had committed, became a matter of grave concern to the conservative and more conscientious supporters of the Dynasty. The first evidence of dissatisfaction was contained in a Memorial submitted by a Manchu sub-Chancellor of the Grand Secretariat who, while accepting the situation as it stood in regard to the boy Emperor, Kuang-Hsü, stipulated that safeguards or guarantees should be given by the Throne for the eventual regulation of the succession and for the provision of heirs to His orbate Majesty, T'ung-Chih.

Tzŭ Hsi was becoming decidedly irritable on this subject of the succession, and there can be little doubt that her own conscience and the views of patriotic Memorialists came to much the same conclusion. The Rescript which she issued on the present occasion was short, sharp, and suggestive of temper :—

"We have already issued an absolutely clear Decree on this subject," she said, "providing for an heir to the late Emperor, and the Decree has been published all over the Empire. The Memorialist's present request gives evidence of unspeakable audacity and an inveterate habit of fault-finding, which has greatly enraged us, so that we hereby convey to him a stern rebuke."

The Memorials and remonstrances of many high officials emphasised the seriousness of this question of the legitimacy of the Imperial succession to the nation at large, and its profound effect on the fundamental principles of

ancestor worship. Nevertheless, having delivered their souls, the Mandarinate, led by the Peking Boards, were disposed to acquiesce in the *fait accompli;* in any case, there was no sign of organised opinion in opposition to the will of the Empress Dowager. The irregularity was evidently serious, and Heaven would doubtless visit the sins of the Throne, as usual, on the unoffending "stupid people"; but the individualism and mutual suspicion, that peculiarly distinguish the Chinese official world, precluded all idea of concerted action or remedial measures.

One official, however, had the full courage of his convictions, and, by the time-honoured expedient of self-destruction, focussed the attention of the nation on the gravity of the question, as no amount of fine writing could have done. Resort to suicide by indignant patriots, as a proof of their sincere distress, is a practice praised and justified alike by historians in China and Japan, and there is no denying that, as an argument against all forms of despotism, it has the crowning merit of finality. It has, moreover, certain qualities of deliberate courage and cultured philosophy that bring irresistibly to mind the Roman patrician at his best, and which fully account for the distinction which such a death confers amongst a people that loves its orthodoxies, as it loves peace, undisturbed.

The name which will go down in Chinese history, as the defender of the national and true faith in connection with the illegal succession of the infant Emperor Kuang-Hsü, is that of the Censor, Wu K'o-tu, an upright and fearless scholar of the best type. For the reasons stated in his farewell Memorial, he waited four years after the death of the Emperor T'ung-Chih, hoping against hope that the wide-spread dissatisfaction of the *literati* and officials would take definite form, and lead the Empress Dowager to regulate the future succession, and to placate the disinherited ghost of T'ung-Chih, by the issue of a new Decree. Disappointed in this hope, he seized the classically correct occasion of the late Emperor's funeral (1879) to commit suicide near his grave, taking care to leave

behind him a swan-song which, as he knew, will live long in the memory of scholars and officials throughout the Empire. His death had the immediate effect of convincing Tzŭ Hsi of error. Realising the strength of public opinion underlying the Censor's protest, she endeavoured at once to placate his accusing spirit by giving the pledges for which he had pleaded, in regard to provision in the future of a successor to T'ung-Chih. Nor was it on this occasion only that the death of Wu K'o-tu influenced her actions and disturbed her superstitious mind. In after years, and especially at the time of the flight to Hsi-an, she recognised his influence, and the punishment of her misdeed, in the disasters which had overtaken the Throne.

As an example of the principles of action, and the calm frame of mind which are the fine flower of the Confucian system of philosophy, and, therefore, worthy of our close and sympathetic study, we give the full story of the death of this patriotic protestant, as well as a translation of his Memorial.

His suicide took place in a small temple at Ma-shen ch'iao, close to the mausoleum of T'ung-Chih. His minutely detailed instructions for the disposal of his remains, with the least possible trouble to his family and friends, bespeak the gentleman and the scholar. To the priest in charge of the shrine, a "bad man," he addressed the following characteristic letter:—

"Priest Chou, be not afraid. I have no desire to bring evil upon you. I was compelled to borrow the use of your plot of hallowed ground, as a spot appropriate for the death of an honest man. Inform now the Magistrate at once, and see that the Memorial enclosed in my despatch box is forwarded without delay. Buy for me a cheap coffin and have it painted black inside. My clothes are all in order, only the leather soles of my boots require to be cut off before you lay me in my coffin. I have cut my finger slightly, which accounts for the blood stains that you may notice. Twenty taels will be ample for my coffin. I should not think that the Magistrate will need to hold an inquest. Please have a coating of lacquer put on the coffin, to fill up any cracks in the joints, and have it nailed down, pending the Empresses' decision as to my remains. Then, buy a few feet of ground adjoining the late Emperor's tomb, and have me

buried quickly.[1] There is no need for me to be buried in my ancestral cemetery; any spot is a good enough resting place for a loyal and honest man.

"You will find forty-five taels in my box, of which you may keep the balance after paying for my coffin and burial expenses. As to my watch, and the other articles on my person, it is known at my home exactly what I brought here with me. You must see to it that no one is permitted to insult my corpse, and my son will be deeply grateful to you for performing these last offices for me, in his place. You need not fear that the Magistrate's underlings will make trouble for you, but be careful not to tamper with the box containing my Memorial to the Empresses.

"You can cut my body down to-morrow morning, and then have it placed in some cool and shady spot. Fearing that possibly you might come in by accident and find me hanging, I have taken a dose of opium, so as to make certain of death. If you should dare to meddle with my private affairs, as you have been trying to do these past few days, it will only lead to your being mixed up in the case, which might bring you to grief.

"All I ask of you is that you notify the Magistrate at once, and that you do not allow women and children to come in and gaze upon my remains. There is nothing strange or abnormal here; death had become an unavoidable duty. Those who understand me, will pity; that is all. The last earnest instructions of Wu K'o-tu."

Next, to his son, he expressed his dying wishes in a letter which embodies many of the Confucian scholar's most cherished ideals and beliefs, a document pathetic in its simple dignity, its pride of ancient lineage and duty well done according to his lights.

"Chih-huan, my son, be not alarmed when you hear the news of my death, and on no account allow your grief to disturb the family. Your mother is old, your wife is young, and my poor little grandchildren are but babies. Tell them that I am dead, but bid them not to grieve over my suicide. Our family tree goes back over five hundred years; for two centuries there have been members of our clan among the Imperial concubines, and for three hundred years we have devoted ourselves to husbandry and scholarship. For eighteen generations our family has borne a good name; I, who am now seventy years of age, can claim an unsullied record, although as a lad I was somewhat given to dissipation. No man can truthfully accuse me of having failed

[1] The burial place was close to, but necessarily outside, the large enclosed park which contains the Imperial mausolea.

to observe the main principles of duty, and it is for this reason that my friends and former pupils have always sought my services as a teacher of the Confucian doctrine. Quite recently I declined the pressing invitation of the Grand Secretary, the Marquis Tso Tsung-t'ang, who wished me to become tutor to his family, because the date was at hand for His late Majesty's burial, and I desired quietly to await to-day's event.

"Ever since, at the age of twenty-four, I took my M.A. degree, I have been of prudent conduct, and have observed the proprieties in official life. In the study of history I have ever been deeply touched by examples of patriotism and loyalty to the Sovereign, and the splendid lives of the ancients have moved me, now to tears and again to exuberance of joy.

"Upon the death of the late Emperor, I had determined to memorialise the Empresses Dowager, through the Censorate, and had fully made up my mind to accept my fate for so doing; but an old friend, to whom I showed the draft, begged me not to forward it, not only because I had already been punished for similar rashness on a former occasion, but because he said some of its allusions to current events were not absolutely accurate. Therefore I waited until to-day, but now I can wait no longer. It is my wish to die, in order that the purpose of my life may be fittingly accomplished and a lifetime of loyalty consummated. My death is in no way due to the slanders which have been circulated about me.

"When you receive this letter, come straightway to the Temple of the Threefold Duties at the bridge of the God of Horses, twelve miles to the east of Chi Chou and quite close to the Imperial mausolea. There seek out the Taoist priest, Chou; he knows my burial place, and I have asked him to buy me a coffin and to have it painted black inside. My burial clothes are all in order, but I have asked him to cut off the leather soles from my boots.[1] He is to buy a certain small piece of ground, close to the Imperial tomb, which is to be my grave. This will be far better than having my remains taken to the ancestral burial ground, and there is really no need for me to rest there, as my younger brother already lies beside your grandparents. He, you remember, committed suicide twenty years ago at his house in Peking, because of private troubles, and now I follow his example, because of disorder in the State. People will say, no doubt, that our family burial ground is become a place of evil omen, but pay no heed to them. No doubt you will desire to take home my remains, but do not so. Take instead my photograph, the one I had taken just before I left Peking, and have an enlargement of it hung up in our

[1] Burial clothes should all be new and clean—by cutting away the soles, his boots would look less shabby.

family hall. Thus shall you observe the old custom which preserves relics of the departed. Why go to the expense and trouble of transporting a coffin over a thousand miles?

"Even though it should happen that the Empresses should cause dire penalties to be inflicted upon my corpse because of my effrontery of language, you may be sure that in this enlightened age, there is no possibility of my offences being visited upon my wife and family. All you need to do is to borrow from our friends money enough to take you from Peking, and after that, you must make the best of your way to our family home, begging if necessary. On no account must you remain in Peking, for by so doing you will only attract attention and further endanger your father.[1]

"What I chiefly deprecate in you, my son, is your quick tongue; you must really try to amend your ways in this respect and endeavour to be less hasty. If people tell you that your father was loyal, do not contradict them; if they say he was an honest man, you should agree. Read carefully the advice of Ma Yüan, the great General, to his nephew, and Wang Hou's admonitions to his sons.

"When your mother married me she had good prospects, as the daughter or an old military family. Since her marriage she has dutifully served my parents, and her reputation for filial devotion is excellent. I regret that I was not destined to bring her happiness and good fortune: she is old now, and you alone are left to her. It is your duty to take her to our home and minister to her old age.

"As regards the few poor acres of land left me by my father, I feel that I cannot reasonably expect you to follow the example of the ancient worthies and to surrender it all to your brothers, but at least I ask that you should allow them to live amicably with you. Your wife is a sensible woman—tell her from me that the happiness of every household depends on the temper of its womenfolk. I knew one woman who feigned death in order to induce her husband to treat his brothers more kindly, but this was a heroic act, far above the moral capacity of your wife.

"As to the forty taels[2] which you will find on my person, you will hand over to the Taoist priest, Chou, any balance there may remain after he has paid for my coffin and burial expenses. On arriving at Chi Chou, go at once and see the Magistrate, to whom I have written; thence proceed to the temple, where you must give them some extra money to compensate them for all the trouble they have had. Thereafter return to Peking, and there await the Empresses's decision in regard to my case.

[1] *I.e.* by causing the Empresses to have his corpse mutilated.
[2] About £10.

"See to it that my small debts are all paid, that my life may end in fitting and harmonious dignity. At a moment like this, I am naturally agitated in mind. It is hard to foretell what the decision of the Empresses may be, but at least my conscience is clear, and what does anything else matter? For your own personal safety, I do not think you need have any fear.

"Present my compliments to Chang Chih-tung: I only wish I could have had more of the old time talks with him. Go also to the Marquis Tso Tsung-t'ang. He has not treated me well of late, but slanders poisoned his sympathy, at which I do not wonder. The memory of his former kindnesses is precious to me, and I know that he will never let you starve.

"Your wife, in giving birth to my grandchildren, has conferred blessings upon me; you must never think of allowing her parents to provide for you. Leave therefore at once for our family home. There must be no delay about this. As to the Taoist priest, it irks me to make use of people in this way. He is a bad man; yet must we bear with him. Tell him that I regret having put his temple to this purpose; he need only spend ten taels on my coffin and a few taels more for the little plot of ground to bury me in. I am a worthless official and deserve nothing better than this.

"Why have I delayed so long? Because I did not wish to disturb the Empresses with the news of my death at this critical time. All the Decrees which have appeared since the Emperor Kuang-Hsü came to the Throne have moved me greatly, and much have I deplored my inability to serve their Majesties better. In days of old, loyal servants of the State were wont to commit suicide as an act of remonstrance against the degeneracy of their Sovereigns. Not for a moment are the Empresses to be compared to monarchs like Ming Huang of the T'ang Dynasty, who deserted his capital before the invader, or Li Tsung, of the Sungs, whose foolishness led to the Mongol wars. Nevertheless my death is due to the same principles as those which actuated those faithful Councillors.

"Go home now, and teach your children to study. Do not open my Memorial to the Empresses. It is sealed, and I have asked the local Magistrate to forward it for presentation."

His Memorial to the Throne was, in fact (as the letter to his son plainly indicates), an indictment of the degeneracy of the ruler of the Empire; incidentally, it throws much light on the orthodox point of view in regard to the question of the Imperial succession. Its preamble sets forth the object with which it was written, and in the hope of which the writer died, namely, to induce the Empress Dowager

to determine the future succession, providing an heir to the Emperor T'ung-Chih, in accordance with precedent and the laws of the Dynasty. The text of this remarkable document is as follows :—

"I, your worthless servant, have heard that the fact of a nation being well governed does not necessarily preclude all possibility of anarchy, nor does a nation at peace dismiss altogether from mind the chances of violent disturbance; should anarchy and rebellion be regarded as possibilities too remote to merit a thought, it were idle and superfluous to advise the Sovereign of so perfect a State. To ask the Imperial wisdom to see danger where no real peril exists would be simply inviting evil omens.

"On a former occasion I, your guilty servant, wittingly incurred danger of death or imprisonment, because, in the heat of indignation, I dared to remonstrate with the Throne. At that time the Princes and Ministers about your Throne asked permission to subject me to a criminal enquiry, but His late Majesty T'ung-Chih was pleased to spare me, so that I neither suffered death by the headsman's sword nor imprisonment, nor did I run the risk of further exciting the Imperial wrath by my evidence before a criminal court. Thrice have I deserved, without receiving, the penalty of death. Without desiring my forfeit life, it was granted me, so that my last few years have been, as it were, a boon at the hands of His late Majesty.

"But on the 5th day of the 12th Moon of the 13th year of T'ung-Chih the earth was rent and heaven itself was shaken by the great catastrophe, and on that day their Majesties the Empresses Dowager issued the following Decree : ' The departed Emperor has mounted the Dragon and is become a guest on high, leaving no heir to the Throne. We are compelled to appoint Tsai T'ien, son of Prince Ch'un, to be heir to His Majesty Hsien-Feng, to enter on the great inheritance as the new Emperor. When to him an heir shall be born, he shall become son by adoption to the late Emperor T'ung-Chih.'

"I, your unworthy servant, wept bitterly as, reverently kneeling, I read this Decree. I cannot but feel, after most careful consideration, that the Empresses Dowager have doubly erred in appointing an heir to the Emperor Hsien-Feng and not to His late Majesty. For thus the new Emperor, being heir to His Majesty Hsien-Feng, enters upon the great heritage not, as he should, by mandate of His late Majesty T'ung-Chih, but by mandate of the Empresses. Hence the future succession must, as a matter of course, revert to the heir of the new Emperor, even though there should be no explicit instructions to that effect. But, as this Decree expressly ordains that this shall be so, it

follows that a precedent will be established, whereby the great inheritance may pass by adoption.

"I, your unworthy servant, realise that it is no light matter for a loyal subject to refer to the future death of a Sovereign while that Sovereign is still alive, entitled to all his reverence and devotion. But, for more than two centuries, the ancestral tradition of our House-law has been observed that the Throne shall pass from father to son, and this law should be steadfastly maintained for ten thousand generations amongst those of us who recognise a common descent. Moreover, Prince Ch'un is a loyal statesman, justly revered by all as a virtuous Prince. His Memorial has inspired everyone of us with fresh feelings of enthusiastic loyalty. His words are but the mirror of his mind; how could any falseness find therein a place? When I perused his Memorial, tears of joy irrepressible fell from my eyes. If ever the Prince should learn of this my humble Memorial, he may perchance be wroth at my perversity or pity my folly; at all events he will never blame me for endeavouring to stir up vain strife by my words.

"The new Emperor is of gentle disposition; from the Empress Dowager he had received the 'precious inheritance' and until his dying day he will naturally be of one mind with the Empresses in this matter. But in the Palace there are sycophants as well as honest men, and many conflicting opinions. To take examples from history: at the beginning of the Sung Dynasty, even that great and good man the Grand Secretary Chao P'u, led the way in obeying the orders of the Empress Dowager Tu. Again, under the Ming Dynasty, a venerable servant of the State, the Grand Secretary Wang Chih, was ashamed that it should be left to a barbarian like Huang Kung (native of an aboriginal tribe in Kuangsi) to memorialise urging the lawful Heir Apparent's succession to the Emperor Ching-T'ai, when no Chinese official dared to do so. If even virtuous men could act thus what need to enquire about disloyal subjects? If such be the conduct of old servants, how shall we blame upstarts? To set aside settled ordinances may be bad, but how much worse is our case where no ordinances exist? We should therefore seek if perchance we may find some way out of this double error, whereby we may return to the right way. I therefore beg that the Empresses may be pleased to issue a second Decree explicitly stating that the great inheritance shall hereafter revert to the adopted son of His late Majesty T'ung-Chih, and that no Minister shall be allowed to upset this Decree, even though the new Emperor be blessed with a hundred sons. If, in this way, the succession be rectified and the situation defined, so that further confusion be hereafter impossible, the House-law of the present Dynasty will be observed, which

requires that the Throne be handed down from father to son. Thus, to the late Emperor, now childless, an heir will be provided and the Empresses Dowager will no longer be without a grandson. And, for all time, the orderly maintenance of the succession will be ascribed to the Empresses, whose fame will be changeless and unending. This is what I, your guilty servant, mean, when I say that the double error which has been committed may yet serve to bring us back to the right way.

"I, your most unworthy slave, had intended to memorialise on this matter when His Majesty died, and to present the Memorial through the Censorate. But it occurred to me that, since I had lost my post, I was debarred from addressing the Throne. Besides, how grave a matter is this! If advice in such a matter be given by a Prince or a Minister, it is called the sage and far-reaching counsel of a statesman; but if it comes from a small and insignificant official it is called the idle utterance of a wanton babbler. Never could I have believed that the many wise and loyal statesmen of your Court could one and all regard this as a matter of no immediate urgency, dismissing it as a question unprofitable for discussion. I waited, therefore, and the precious moments passed, but none of them have moved in the matter.

"Afterwards, having received renewed marks of the Imperial favour, and being again summoned to audience, I was granted the position of a Board Secretary, and placed on the Board of Appointments. This was more than four years ago; yet all this time apparently not one of all the Ministers of your Court has even given this grave matter a moment's consideration. The day for His late Majesty's entombment has now arrived, and I fear that what has happened will gradually pass from the minds of men. The time, therefore, is short, and the reasons which led me to delay hold good no longer. Looking upward, as the divine soul of His Majesty soars heavenward on the Dragon, wistfully I turn my eyes upon the Palace enclosure. Beholding the bows and arrows left behind on the Bridge Mountain,[1] my thoughts turn to the cherished mementoes of my Sovereign. Humbly I offer up these years of life that have been added unto me by His Majesty's clemency; humbly I lay them down in propitiation of the Empresses Dowager, to implore from them a brief Decree on behalf of the late Emperor.

"But, on the point of leaving this world, I feel that my mind is confused. The text of this, my Memorial, lacks clearness; there are manifold omissions in it. It has ever been my custom to revise a draft twice before handing in a Memorial, but on this occasion I have not been able to make such careful revision. I, your unworthy servant, am no scholar like to the men of old;

[1] The point whence, according to legend, the Yellow Emperor ascended to heaven and where his clothes were buried.

how, then, could I be calm and collected as they were wont to be? Once there went a man to his death, and he could not walk erect. A bystander said to him 'Are you afraid, sir?' He replied, 'I am.' 'If you are afraid, why not turn back?' He replied, 'My fear is a private weakness; my death is a public duty.' This is the condition in which I find myself to-day. 'When a bird is dying its song is sad. When a man is dying his words are good.'[1] How could I, your worthless servant, dare to compare myself with the sage Tseng Tzu? Though I am about to die, yet may my words not be good; but I trust that the Empresses and the Emperor will pity my last sad utterance, regarding it neither as an evil omen nor the idle plaint of one who has no real cause for grief. Thus shall I die without regret. A statesman of the Sung Dynasty has remarked: 'To discuss an event before it occurs is foolhardy. But if one waits until is has occurred, speech is then too late, and, therefore, superfluous.' Foolhardiness notwithstanding, it is well that the Throne should be warned before events occur; no Minister should ever have to reproach himself with having spoken too late. Heartily do I wish that my words may prove untrue, so that posterity may laugh at my folly. I do not desire that my words may be verified, for posterity to acclaim my wisdom. May it be my fate to resemble Tu Mu,[2] even though to imitate him be a transgression of duty. May I be likened, rather, to Shih Ch'iu, the sight of whose dead body proved, as he had hoped, an effective rebuke to his erring Prince. Thus may my foolish but loyal words be justified in the end.

"I pray the Empresses and Emperor to remember the example of Their Majesties Shun-Chih and K'ang-Hsi, in tempering justice with mercy: that they may promote peace and prosperity, by appointing only worthy men to public offices; that they may refrain from striving for those objects which foreigners hold dear, for by such striving they will surely jeopardise the future of our Middle Kingdom; that they may never initiate any of the innovations disdained by their ancestors, which would assuredly leave to posterity a heritage of woe. These are my last words, my last prayer, the end and crown of my life.

"POSTSCRIPT.

"Having been a Censor, I venture thus to memorialise the Throne. But as my present official position does not permit of

[1] A quotation from Tseng Tzu, one of the most noted disciples of Confucius.

[2] A sort of Chinese Malaprop, known to history as one who invariably spoke at the wrong time.

my forwarding this direct, I request the high officials of my Board to present it for me. As my name did not figure originally in the list of officials to represent my Board at the ceremonies preparatory to His late Majesty's burial, I begged the Grand Secretary Pao Yün to allow me to be included in the list. Pao Yün could not have foretold my suicide, so that no blame can attach to him for being my sponsor. Under our enlightened Dynasty, how could anyone imagine a return to the ancient and happily obsolete practice of being buried alive with one's Sovereign? But my grief is too great and cannot be restrained; for to-day my Sovereign returns, dragon-borne, to Heaven, and all the world weeps with me in woe unutterable.

"I have respectfully but fully explained my feelings in this question of the lawful succession to the Throne, and now, under the title of your guilty servant, I present this my Memorial."

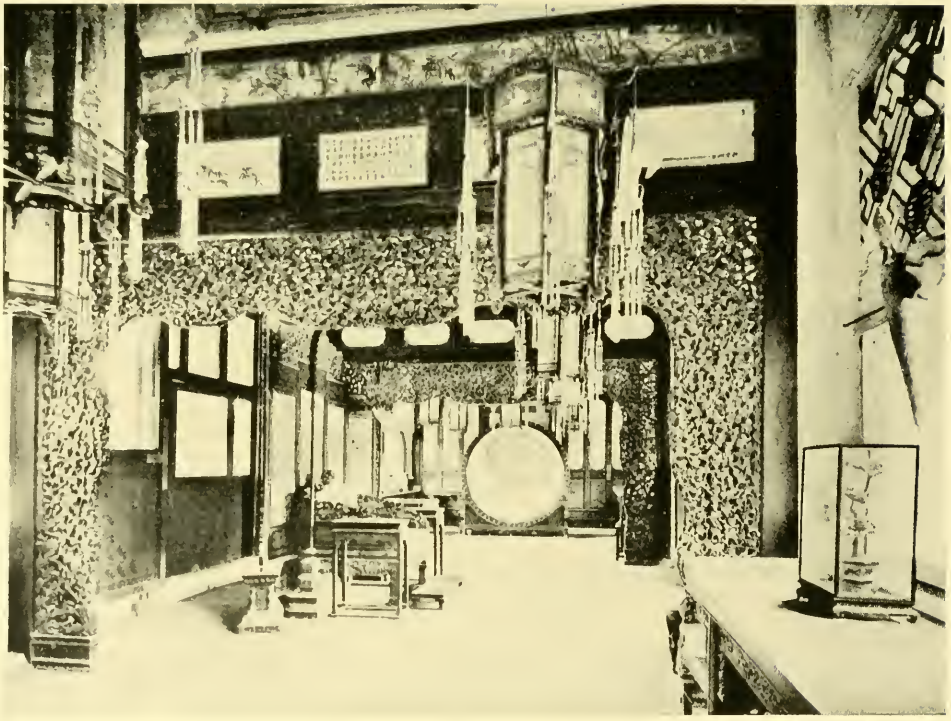
VIII

TZŬ HSI BECOMES SOLE REGENT

THE days of mourning for T'ung-Chih being done, his remains disposed of as auspiciously as the Court of Astronomers could desire, and his ghost placated, thanks to Wu K'o-tu, by solemn promises on the part of his mother to provide him with a suitable and legitimate heir in due season, life in the Forbidden City settled down once more into the old grooves under the joint Regency of the Empresses of the Eastern and Western Palaces.

But before long the new Emperor, a nervous and delicate boy, became, all unconsciously, a thorn in the side of the woman who put him on the Throne. As he passed from infancy to boyhood, it was a matter of common knowledge and report in the Palace that he showed a marked preference for the Empress Tzŭ An, who, by her kind and sympathetic treatment, had won the child's heart. In the innocence of his lonely youth he frequented therefore the Eastern Palace, while Tzŭ Hsi, whose pride could brook no rivals, even in the heart of a child, was compelled to look on, and to realise that the forming of the future ruler's mind was in the hands of another woman. There were not lacking those who told her that her colleague, secretly and with ulterior motives, encouraged the boy to oppose and displease her. Under these conditions, it was inevitable that the young Emperor should gradually become a cause of increasing jealousy and friction between the two women.

Tzŭ Hsi undoubtedly resented the boy's predilection as much as her colleague's action in encouraging it. At Court, where everyone and everything is a potential instrument for intrigue and party faction, the young Emperor's attitude could not fail to cause her grave concern. She



Photo, Ogawa, Tokio.

INTERIOR OF THE I KUN KUNG.

Tzŭ Hsi lived in these Apartments for some time after the death of T'ung Chih.

was well aware that Tzŭ An could never become, of herself, a formidable rival, but should she hereafter enjoy the Emperor's confidence and support, and instigate him to become the centre of a faction against her (which he did), there might be danger in the situation for herself. As the Emperor's minority approached its end, it therefore became the more necessary for her to take all possible precautions. She had no intention of sharing the fate of that Empress Consort of Ch'ien Lung who was banished to the "Cold Palace" and whose honours and titles were taken from her on charges of "wild extravagance, love of the theatre and insubordination to the Emperor's mother."

A further cause of friction occurred between the two Empresses Regent on the occasion of the Imperial progress to the Eastern tombs, in 1880, when the boy Emperor was nine years old. On this occasion, Tzŭ An, evidently prompted by Prince Kung to assert herself and her rights, insisted on taking precedence in all the ceremonies of the ancestral sacrifices at the Imperial Mausolea and at the prostrations which custom decrees shall be made before each of the "Jewelled Cities," as the mounds are called which cover the Imperial grave chambers. When Their Majesties arrived at the grave of Hsien-Feng, there was serious friction. Tzŭ An, as the senior Consort of the deceased monarch, claimed as her right the central position, at the same time relegating her colleague to the place on her right, leaving the place of honour on the left unoccupied. Not content with this, Tzŭ An went on to remind her Co-Regent that, where sacrifices to Hsien-Feng were in question, Tzŭ Hsi was entitled only to claim precedence as a senior concubine, her elevation to the position of Empress Mother having taken place after his decease. As a concubine, etiquette required her, during the sacrifice, to take a position on one side and slightly in the rear, while the vacant place of honour to Tzŭ An's left belonged to the shade of Hsien-Feng's first consort, who had died before his accession, but had been posthumously raised to the rank of Senior Empress. Tzŭ Hsi, realising that this indignity was put upon her at the

instigation of Prince Kung and the Princes of the Imperial family, had no intention of submitting, and peremptorily insisted upon taking the position to which her actual rank and authority entitled her. The quarrel was sharp but short. Tzŭ Hsi, as might have been expected, carried the day, but she felt that such a scene before the ancestral tombs, witnessed by a large *entourage,* was semi-sacrilegious and from every point of view unseemly. She had been made to lose face by the incident—clearly premeditated—and the fact had immediate effect upon her subsequent actions and her relations with her colleague.[1]

At the time of this progress to the tombs, Jung Lu was in command of the Metropolitan Gendarmerie, entrusted with the duty of escorting Their Majesties. Shortly after their return to Peking, however, he incurred her sharp displeasure by reason of conduct which Tzŭ Hsi was not likely to overlook, even in her chief favourite. Ever since the Jehol days of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy, and particularly during the crisis that followed the death of T'ung-Chih, this powerful Manchu had enjoyed her favour and confidence in an unusual degree, and as Comptroller of her Household, he had the right of *entrée* to the Forbidden City at all times. But in 1880, suffering no doubt from *ennui* induced by the inactivity of Court life, he committed the indiscretion of an intrigue with one of the ladies of the late Emperor's seraglio. Information of the scandal was laid before Her Majesty by the Imperial tutor Weng T'ung-ho, between whom and Jung Lu there was never love lost. It was commonly rumoured at Court, after the event, that Tzŭ Hsi, leaving nothing to chance, had herself discovered the culprit in the women's quarters of the Palace, a heinous offence. Be this as it may, Jung Lu

[1] It is curious to note how frequently the Imperial tombs have been the scene of such unseemly wrangles, wherein grievances and passions, long pent up within the Palace precincts, find utterance. A case of this kind occurred in 1909, on the occasion of the burial of Tzŭ Hsi, when the surviving consorts of T'ung-Chih and Kuang-Hsü, having quarrelled with the new Empress Dowager (Lung Yü) on a similar question of precedence, refused to return to the City and remained in dudgeon at the tombs until a special mission, under an Imperial Duke, was sent humbly to beg them to come back, to the no small scandal of the orthodox.

was summarily, though quietly, deprived of all his posts, and for the next seven years he lived in retirement. In this case Tzŭ Hsi vindicated her pride at the expense of her own comfort and sense of security, and it was not long before she had reason to regret the absence of her most loyal and trusty adviser. Amongst her courtiers she found none to replace him; she missed his wise counsel, courage and fidelity. But having once committed herself to the step of dismissing him, she was unwilling to lose face with him and with her Court by changing her mind. His removal, however, undoubtedly led to increased friction between herself and Tzŭ An, whom she suspected of being a party to Jung Lu's *liaison*.

Finally, in March 1881, a serious quarrel took place between the two Empresses, on the subject of the influence which the Chief Eunuch Li Lien-ying had come to exercise, and the arrogance of his manner. Tzŭ An complained that this favourite and confidential servant of her colleague ignored her, setting her authority at nought, so that she was mocked even by her own subordinates. She deplored and denounced the existing state of affairs, commenting unpleasantly on the notorious fact that the eunuch was openly known by the title of "Lord of nine thousand years," a title which implied that he was but one degree lower than the Emperor ("Lord of ten thousand years") and entitled to something approximating to Imperial honours.[1]

The quarrel on this occasion was exceedingly bitter, nor was any reconciliation subsequently effected between the Empresses. It is very generally believed, and was freely stated at the time, that, incensed beyond measure and impatient of any further interference with her authority, Tzŭ Hsi brought about the death of her colleague, which was commonly attributed to poison. In the atmosphere of an Oriental Court such charges are as inevitable as they are incapable of proof or disproof, and were it not for the

[1] This title was originally given to an infamous eunuch of the Court of the Ming Emperor Chu Yŭ hsiao, who, because of his influence over his dissolute master, was canonised by the latter after his death. The same title was claimed and used by the Eunuch An Te-hai, *vide supra*, p. 58.

unfortunate fact that those who stood in the way of Tzŭ Hsi's ambitions, or who incurred her displeasure, frequently failed to survive it, we should be justified in refusing to attach importance to the imputations of foul play raised on this and other occasions. But these occasions are too numerous to be entirely overlooked or regarded as simple coincidences. In the present instance, the Empress Tzŭ An fell ill of a sudden and mysterious sickness, and, in the words of the Imperial Decree, she "ascended the fairy chariot for her distant journey" on the evening of the 10th day of the 3rd Moon. In accordance with prescribed custom, she drafted just before her decease a valedictory Decree which, as will be observed, touches hardly at all on the political questions of the day. These, even at the moment of her death, she appeared to leave, as by established right, to her strong-minded colleague. After referring to her position as Senior Consort of the Emperor Hsien-Feng, and recording the fact that during his minority the young Emperor had done justice to his education (in which she had always been much interested), the Edict proceeds as follows:—

"In spite of the arduous duties of the State, which have fully occupied my time, I was naturally of robust constitution and had therefore fully expected to attain to a good old age and to enjoy the Emperor's dutiful ministrations. Yesterday, however, I was suddenly stricken with a slight illness and His Majesty thereupon commanded his physician to attend me; later His Majesty came in person to enquire as to my health. And now, most unexpectedly, I have had a most dangerous relapse. At 7 P.M. this evening I became completely confused in mind and now all hope of my recovery appears to be vain. I am forty-five years of age and for close on twenty years have held the high position of a Regent of the Empire. Many honorific titles and ceremonies of congratulation have been bestowed upon me: what cause have I therefore for regret?"

At her request, and with that modesty which custom prescribes, the period of Imperial mourning was reduced from twenty-seven months to twenty-seven days. There is a human touch in the conclusion of this Decree which seems to preclude the conclusion that Tzŭ Hsi had any

hand in its drafting, for it describes Tzŭ An as having been careful to "set a good example of thrift and sobriety in the Palace and to have steadily discountenanced all pomp and vain display in her share of the Court ceremonies." As most of the charges levelled for many years against Tzŭ Hsi by Censors and other high officials referred to her notorious extravagance, this, and Tzŭ An's last request for a modest funeral as the fitting conclusion to a modest life, were a palpable hit.

Tzŭ An was dead. The playmate of her youth, the girl who had faced with her the solemn mysteries of the Forbidden City, the woman who later, because of her failure to provide an heir to the Throne, had effaced herself in favour of the Empress Mother, her poor-spirited rival of many years—Tzŭ An would trouble her no more. Henceforth, without usurpation of authority, Tzŭ Hsi was free to direct the ship of State alone, sole Regent of the Empire.

And with the death of her colleague came the desire to be free from the restraints of advice given by prescriptive right of long-standing authority, the ambition to be the only and undisputed controller of the nation's destinies, and acknowledged Head of the State. For many years—in fact, since the decapitation of her favourite eunuch, An Te-hai, by Prince Kung [1] and her Co-Regent—she had been on bad terms with that Prince, and jealous of his influence and well-earned reputation for statesmanship. The manner in which, years before, she had taken from him his title of Adviser to the Government has already been described. Unable to dispense with his services, desirous of profiting by his ripe experience, especially in foreign affairs, she had borne with her Prime Minister grudgingly and of necessity. In 1884, however, she felt strong enough to stand alone, and the war with France (caused by the dispute as to China's claims to suzerainty over Tongking) gave her an opportunity and an excuse for getting rid at one stroke of Prince Kung and his colleagues of the Grand Council.

The immediate pretext for their dismissal was the

[1] See above, p. 60.

destruction of the Chinese fleet of junks by the French in the Min River, but Her Majesty's real reason was that she believed that the Prince was intriguing against her with the young Emperor, and that he was to some extent responsible for a recent Memorial, in which several Censors had roundly denounced her for depraved morals and boundless extravagance.

Prince Kung accordingly retired from the scene, to remain in unemployed obscurity until 1894, when, after the first disasters of the war with Japan, Tzŭ Hsi, older and wiser, turned to him once more for assistance. He never completely regained the influence with the Empress which he had enjoyed in the earlier days of the first Regency, but after his return to office until his death in 1898, his prestige, especially among foreigners, was great. Tzŭ Hsi, though she loved him not, was forced to admit that he had accepted and borne his degradation with dignity.

After the issue of the above Decree, Prince Kung was succeeded in office by Prince Li, the head of the eight Princely families and a descendant of a younger son of Nurhachi. With him were associated on the Grand Council, amongst others, the elder brother of Chang Chih-tung and Sun Yu-wen.[1] The latter was a bitter enemy of the Imperial Tutor, Weng T'ung-ho. In appointing him to the Council, Tzŭ Hsi followed her favourite tactics of creating dissension among her advisers and maintaining the equilibrium of her own authority as the resultant of their conflicting forces.

Her Majesty's next step aroused a storm of opposition and criticism. She decreed that in all matters of urgency, the Grand Council, before advising the Throne, should confer with the Emperor's father, Prince Ch'un, but added that upon the Emperor's attaining his majority, she would

[1] Sun remained in high favour until December 1894, when the Emperor was induced by Weng T'ung-ho to dismiss him. At that time the Empress was taking little active part in the direction of affairs, occupying her time with theatricals and other diversions at the Summer Palace, and playing a watching game in politics, so that for a while Sun's life was in real danger.

issue further instructions on this subject. This was not only an entirely new and irregular departure, since it made the Emperor's father *de facto* head of the executive, but it implied the possibility of violation of the solemn pledges given to the nation in 1875, as to the provision of an heir to the Emperor T'ung-Chih. Fears were once more aroused in an acute form that Prince Ch'un might hereafter persuade his son to ignore the ancestral claims of the late Emperor, and thus constitute the house of Ch'un founders of a new line. The Prince would have great inducement to adopt this policy, as it would confer upon him and upon his wife (Tzŭ Hsi's sister) Imperial rank during their lives and Imperial honours after their death. The reign of T'ung-Chih would in that case be practically expunged, going down to posterity dishonoured as the ignominious end of the senior branch of the Ta Ching Dynasty, and the Yehonala clan would become of paramount influence. A wide field would thus be left for future dissensions, treasons, stratagems and Court intrigues. In fact the position thus created would be somewhat similar to that which arose from the rivalry of the Houses of York and Lancaster in English history.

An Imperial Clansman, named Sheng Yü, and other scholars, memorialised in the most urgent terms praying the Empress to cancel this appointment and suggesting that if Prince Ch'un's advice were really needed, it should be given to herself direct and not to the Grand Council.

To these remonstrances Tzŭ Hsi replied:—

"There is no doubt that the sage decisions of former Emperors deserve to be treated with every consideration and respect, but it is to be observed that, ever since I assumed the Regency, I have been by circumstances compelled to confer regularly on confidential business with a Prince of the Blood. You must all be aware that this situation has been forced upon me owing to the exigencies of the times, and was none of my seeking. The Decree in which, some days ago, I appointed Prince Ch'un to be Adviser to the Council, had no reference to ordinary routine business, with which he has no concern, but only to urgent matters of State. I had not, and have not, any intention of giving him a definite appointment, and he himself was most reluctant to accept at my hands even this advisory position; it

was because of his repeated entreaties that I promised to issue further instructions in the matter upon the Emperor's reaching his majority. The present arrangement is of a purely temporary nature. You cannot possibly realise how great and numerous are the problems with which I have to deal single-handed. As to the Grand Council, let them beware of making Prince Ch'un's position an excuse for shirking their responsibilities. In conclusion, I wish that my Ministers would for the future pay more respect to the motives which animate their Sovereign's actions, and abstain from troubling me with their querulous criticisms. The Memorialists' requests are hereby refused."

Rescripts of this kind are curiously suggestive of Queen Elizabeth, and her manner of dealing with similar petitions from her loyal and dutiful subjects.

IX

TZŬ HSI "EN RETRAITE"

In 1887 Kuang-Hsü completed his seventeenth year, and Tzŭ Hsi saw herself confronted by the necessity of surrendering to him the outward and visible signs of sovereignty. The change was naturally viewed with apprehension by those of her courtiers and kinsmen who for the last ten years had basked in the sunshine of her unfettered authority and patronage, whose places and privileges might well be endangered by a new *régime*. When, therefore, as in duty bound, she expressed a desire to retire from public life, it was not surprising that urgent petitions and remonstrances poured in, begging her to continue yet a little while in control of affairs, nor that she should finally allow herself to be persuaded. It was not until February 1889 that she definitely handed over the reins of government to the Emperor, on the occasion of his marriage to the daughter of her brother, Duke Kuei Hsiang.

Tzŭ Hsi was now fifty-five years of age. For nearly thirty years she had been *de facto* ruler of the Celestial Empire. She had tasted the sweets of autocracy, had satisfied all her instincts of dominion, and it seemed as if she were not unwilling to enjoy the fruit of her labours and to exchange the formal routine of the Forbidden City for the pleasures and comparative freedom of life at the Summer Palace, which was now in course of reconstruction. Always avid of movement and change, weary of the increasing toil of audiences and Rescripts, apprehensive, too, of the steadily increasing pressure of the earth-hungry Powers on China's frontiers, she could not fail to be attracted by the prospect of a life of gilded leisure and recreation. Nor could she have remained on the Throne,

Kuang-Hsü being alive, without an overt and flagrant act of usurpation for which, until he had been tried and found wanting, there was no possible justification. Certain writers, foreign and Chinese, have imputed to her at this period a policy of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, suggesting that her hand, though hidden, was never really withdrawn from the affairs of the Forbidden City. To some extent the suggestion is justifiable; but Tzŭ Hsi's retirement in the I-Ho Yüan lasted, roughly speaking, for ten years, during a considerable portion of which period she undoubtedly ceased to concern herself with affairs of State, other than those which directly affected the replenishing of her privy purse.

But while divesting herself of the outward and visible signs of rulership, Tzŭ Hsi had no intention of becoming a negligible quantity, or of losing touch with current events. From her luxurious retreat at the foot of the hills which shelter Peking, she could keep close watch on the doings of the Emperor, and protect the interests of her personal adherents in the capital and the provinces. Her power of appointing and dismissing officials, which drew much of its inspiration from the Chief Eunuch, was never surrendered.

In marrying the Emperor to her favourite niece, Tzŭ Hsi intended to avoid a repetition of the mistake which she had committed in the case of her son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih, whose marriage with the virtuous and courageous A-lu-te had resulted in dangerous intrigues against herself, until death had removed the offenders. Warned by this experience, she made her selection in the present instance less with a view to the Emperor's felicity than to the furtherance of her own purposes, which necessitated the presence by his side of someone who would watch over, and report on, his proceedings and proclivities. This part her niece played to perfection. In appearance she was unattractive, and in disposition and temper unsympathetic, but she possessed a considerable share of the Yehonala intelligence and strength of will. From the very first she was on bad terms with the Emperor. It was no secret at Court that they indulged in fierce and protracted quarrels,

in which the young Empress generally came off victorious. As a natural result, Kuang-Hsü developed and showed a marked preference for the society of his two senior concubines, known respectively as the "Pearl" and "Lustrous" consorts.

Upon the Emperor's assumption of rulership, there was shown a strong feeling amongst the senior members of the Yehonala clan that the opportunity should be taken to consolidate its position and power by conferring on the Emperor's father rank in the hierarchy higher than that which he had hitherto held, with a view to his ultimate canonisation as Emperor. The manner in which this proposal was put forward, and Tzŭ Hsi's refusal to act upon it—while giving all possible "face" to Prince Ch'un—threw much light upon some of the undercurrents of China's dynastic affairs which are so difficult for Europeans to follow.

Shortly after Tzŭ Hsi's retirement from public affairs the Emperor's father, Prince Ch'un, fell ill of a sickness which increased until, on 1st January 1891, he died. In 1890 the Censorate, deeply concerned for a strict observance of the laws and ceremonial etiquette of filial piety, took occasion, in a Memorial of remonstrance, to draw Her Majesty's attention to her duty, and that of the Emperor, of visiting the invalid. Tzŭ Hsi's reply took the form of a rebuke to the Censors, whom she bluntly directed to mind their own business, in a manner which forcibly brings to mind Queen Elizabeth's methods of dealing with similar remonstrances. Nevertheless she took the hint and thenceforward, throughout the summer of 1890, she paid repeated visits to Prince Ch'un's bedside.

This Prince had always been a favourite with Tzŭ Hsi, who greatly preferred him to his elder brothers; she regretted his death and felt the loss of his wise and fearless counsel, which had often guided her policy. He was a staunch Manchu, jealous of the power and privileges of the Clans, and will long be remembered in Chinese history for the remark which he made at a meeting of the Council after the campaign in Tongking. "It were better," said he, "to hand over the Empire to the foreign devils, than

to surrender it at the dictation of these Chinese rebels," a remark which was prompted by the growing discontent of the province of Canton against the Manchus and their rule.

In her Decree recording the Prince's death and praising his eminent services as Chamberlain of the Palace, Head of the Navy [1] and Commander of the Manchu Field Force, Tzŭ Hsi gave detailed instructions for the mourning and funeral ceremonies, presenting in her own name a Tibetan prayer coverlet for the body. She conferred upon him the somewhat obvious (but according to Chinese ideas, highly honourable) title of "deceased father of the Emperor" and ordered that the funeral should be upon a scale "which shall simultaneously display His Majesty's favour and his sense of filial piety," due care being taken at the same time not to outrage the deceased's conspicuous modesty. By these means, which were in accordance with her guiding principle of the "happy mean," she hoped to set at rest all question of "usurping tendencies" and to reassure the Aisin Gioros as to their fears of the undue ambition of the house of Ch'un. Finally, in accordance with the precedent established by the Emperor Ch'ien-Lung, she decreed that the late Prince's residence should be divided into two portions, one to be set aside as his own ancestral Hall and the other as a shrine (it being the birthplace) of His Majesty Kuang-Hsü.

In 1894 the Empress Dowager reached her sixtieth year, which, according to Chinese ideas, is an event calling for special thanksgiving and honour. Secure in her great and increasing popularity, safely entrenched in her prestige and influence, the Old Buddha had expected to devote her leisure at the Summer Palace to preparations for celebrating this anniversary on a scale of unparalleled magnificence. The I-Ho Yüan, as the Summer Palace is called,[2] had been entirely rebuilt, by the Emperor's orders, with

[1] The results of the Prince's eminent services in naval and military reorganisation were demonstrated three years later, not entirely to the nation's satisfaction, in the war with Japan.

[2] From a sentence in the Book of Rites, which means "to give rest and peace to Heaven-sent old age."

funds taken from the Navy Department and other Government Boards since 1889, and had just been completed. Most of the high provincial authorities had been summoned to the capital to take part in these festivities (and, incidentally, to help to pay for them), and amongst them the faithful Jung Lu returned once more to his mistress's side, in high favour, as General in command of the Forces at Peking. (For the last three years he had been at Hsi-an, holding the sinecure post of Tartar General.) Every high official in the Empire had been "invited" to contribute twenty-five per cent. of his salary as a birthday gift to Her Majesty, and the total amount of these offerings must have amounted to several millions of taels. Everything pointed to festivities of great splendour; orders had already been given for the erection of triumphal arches in her honour throughout the whole five miles of the Imperial highway between Peking and the Summer Palace, when the continued disasters which overtook China's forces, immediately after the outbreak of the war with Japan, caused Her Majesty to reconsider the situation, and eventually to cancel all arrangements for the celebration. In the Emperor's name she issued the following somewhat pathetic Decree:—

"The auspicious occasion of my sixtieth birthday, occurring in the 10th Moon of this year, was to have been a joyful event, in which the whole nation would unite in paying to me loyal and dutiful homage. It had been intended that His Majesty the Emperor, accompanied by the whole Court, should proceed to offer congratulations to me, and make obeisance at the Summer Palace, and my officials and people have subscribed funds wherewith to raise triumphal arches, and to decorate the Imperial highway throughout its entire length from Peking to the I-Ho Yüan; high altars have been erected where Buddhist Sutras were to have been recited in my honour. I was not disposed to be unduly obstinate and to insist on refusing these honours, because, at the time that the celebration was planned, my people were enjoying peace and prosperity; moreover, there is precedent for such displays of pageantry and rejoicing in the occasions on which the Emperors K'ang-Hsi and Ch'ien-Lung celebrated their sixtieth birthdays. I, therefore, consented to His Majesty's filial request, and decided to receive birthday congratulations at the Summer Palace. Who would ever have

anticipated that the Japanese (literally, 'dwarf men') would have dared to force us into hostilities, and that since the beginning of the summer they have invaded our tributary State (Corea) and destroyed our fleet? We had no alternative but to draw the sword and to commence a punitive campaign; at this moment our armies are pressing to the front. The people of both nations (China and Corea) are now involved in all the horrors of war, and I am continually haunted by the thought of their distress; therefore, I have issued a grant of three million taels from my privy purse for the maintenance and relief of our troops at the front.

"Although the date of my birthday is drawing close, how could I have the heart, at such a time, to delight my senses with revelries, or to receive from my subjects congratulations which could only be sincere if we had won a glorious victory? I therefore decree that the ceremonies to be observed on my birthday shall be performed at the Palace in Peking, and all preparations at the Summer Palace shall be abandoned forthwith. The words of the Empress."

To which the Emperor adds the filial remark on his own account: "That Her Majesty had acted in accordance with the admirable virtue which always distinguished her, and that, in spite of his own wishes, he was bound reverently to obey her orders in the matter."

China's complete and ignominious defeat by the Japanese forces undoubtedly inflicted no small loss of prestige on the Manchu Dynasty, and was a direct cause of the violent agitation of the Southern Provinces for reform, which led in turn to the *coup d'état* and to the Boxer rising. It is doubtful whether war could have been avoided without even greater sacrifices and humiliation, and the Empress Dowager showed her usual sagacity therefore in refraining from expressing any opinion or taking any share of responsibility in the decision taken by the Emperor. She knew, moreover, that, by the action and advice of her Chief Eunuch, the Navy had for years been starved in order to provide her with funds to rebuild and decorate the Summer Palace, a fact of which some of China's most distinguished advisers were at that time unaware.

As Viceroy of the Metropolitan Province, Li Hung-chang was generally blamed for advising the Court to maintain China's suzerainty over Corea by force of arms,

but, speaking from personal knowledge of this subject, we may state that, like many other Ministers similarly situated, he hesitated until the very last moment before taking risks which he knew to be enormous in both directions. The documents upon which history might have been written with full knowledge of the facts were unfortunately destroyed in the Viceroy's Yamên at Tientsin and in the Inspector-General of Customs' quarters at Peking, in 1900, so that the immediate cause of that disastrous war will probably never be established with complete accuracy. Li Hung-chang was aware that twice already Japan had been bought off from a war of aggression against China, the first time (in 1874) by payment of an indemnity, and again (in 1885) by admitting her to a share in the control of Corea, a concession which had led directly to the present crisis. He realised that even had he been willing to surrender China's rights over Corea (which were of no real advantage to the Chinese Government) the concession might have purchased peace for the time being, but it would certainly have led before long to the loss of the Manchurian Provinces; just as certainly, in fact, as the doom of those provinces was sealed in 1905, on the day that China acquiesced in the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty. Japan's attack on China's positions was diplomatically as unjustifiable as the methods which she adopted in commencing hostilities. Li Hung-chang was fully aware of the preparations that Japan had been making for years, and equally aware of the disorganised state of his own naval and military resources, but he was surrounded by officials who, like the Manchus in 1900, were convinced of China's immense superiority and he was assured by the Chinese Resident in Corea (Yüan Shih-k'ai) that help would be forthcoming from England in the event of Japan's commencing hostilities. There was no doubt of the British Government's sympathy, which was clearly reflected in the attitude and actions of the Consul-General at Seoul.

Chinese historians have openly accused Li Hung-chang of instigating the Court and the Emperor to a war of aggression, and the accusation has been generally credited

abroad. The truth is, that while Li was originally all in favour of sending a Chinese force to suppress the Corean insurrection, he became opposed to taking any steps that might lead to war with Japan, as soon as he realised that war was Japan's object; nevertheless, it is certain that, in the last instance, he was persuaded against his better judgment by the military enthusiasm of his German advisers, and that the sending of the ill-fated *Kow-hsing* and her doomed crew to Corea was a step which he authorised only after consultation with Peking and in full knowledge of the fact that it meant war. No sooner had the *Kow-hsing* been sunk, and the first military disasters of the campaign reported, than he naturally endeavoured to minimise his own share of responsibility in the matter.

Foreigners blamed him for making war on Japan, while his own countrymen attacked him for betraying China to the Japanese, as they subsequently attacked him for selling Manchuria to Russia. Tzŭ Hsi had no great love for the Viceroy, although she admired his remarkable intelligence and adroit methods: but when, after the war, he was fiercely attacked by several of the Censors, and when she found her own name associated with the blame imputed to him, she loyally defended him, as was her wont. In 1895 a Censor named An Wei-chün boldly blamed Her Majesty and the Viceroy for the disasters which had overtaken China. In reply to this extremely outspoken document, the Emperor issued the following Decree, which bears unmistakable signs of Tzŭ Hsi's hand. The attack upon her favourite, Li Lien-ying, was in itself sufficient to bring her to the front, and there is no doubt that at the time she was keeping very close watch on the Emperor's proceedings, and regularly perusing all State papers.

"Owing to the seriousness of recent events, we have been particularly anxious of late to receive and attend to the unprejudiced suggestions of our Censors, and we have abstained from punishing any of them, even when they have made use of improper expressions in addressing us. With the gracious consent of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager, we have given particular attention to all projects whereby the welfare of our people may be advanced, and all our people must by this time

be aware of our sincere desire to promote good Government. In spite of this, the Censor, An Wei-chün, has to-day submitted a Memorial based entirely upon rumours, and containing the following sentence: 'How can you possibly justify your position before your ancestors and to your subjects if you permit the Empress Dowager still to dictate to you, or to interfere in the business of the State?'

"Language of this kind reveals depths of audacity unspeakable, the unbridled licence of a madman's tongue. Were we to fail in inflicting stern punishment in a case of this kind, the result might well be to produce estrangement between Her Majesty the Empress and ourselves. The Censor is, therefore, dismissed from office and sentenced to banishment at the post-roads, on the western frontier where he shall expiate his guilt and serve as a wholesome warning to others. His Memorial is handed back to him with the contempt it deserves."

Tzŭ Hsi felt deeply the humiliation of her country's defeat by the Japanese, a race which, as Chinese historians never fail to remind themselves, took its first lessons in civilisation and culture from Chinese scholars and artists. Anxious at all costs to avoid another invasion of Chihli by the conquerors, she approved the Treaty of Peace, especially when assured by Li Hung-chang that Russia and her Continental allies would not allow Japan to annex any portion of the Manchurian Provinces. As above stated, she declined to permit Li to be made a scapegoat either by her chagrined Manchu kinsmen or by his fierce critics in the south, for she recognised the difficulty of his position, and the fact that he was not directly responsible for the deplorable condition of China's defences. But, woman-like, she had to blame someone for the disasters that had deprived her and her capital of festivities whose splendour should have gone down, making her name glorious, to all posterity; and it was not surprising, therefore, if she heaped reproaches on the Emperor for entering upon so disastrous a war without her full knowledge and consent. It was at this time that began the estrangement which thenceforward gradually grew into the open hostility and secret plottings of 1898, the long bitterness between Tzŭ Hsi and her nephew which was to divide the Palace into camps of strife, and to cease only with their death.

From this time also, as they aver who were in close touch with the life of the Court, the Emperor's Consort,[1] Tzŭ Hsi's niece, became openly alienated from him, and their relations grew more severely strained as his reform tendencies developed and took shape. From 1894 to 1896 there was no noticeable change in the attitude of the Emperor to his august aunt, nor any diminution of his respectful attentions, but the man in the street knew well, as he always knows in China, of the rift in the lute, and when, in 1896, the Emperor's mother (Tzŭ Hsi's sister) died, it was realised that the last bond of amity and possible reconciliation between Kuang-Hsü and the Empress Dowager had been severed.

[1] Subsequently known as the Empress Dowager Lung Yü.

X

THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898

At the beginning of 1898 the Grand Council was composed of the following officials: Prince Kung, the Emperor's uncle, Prince Li, whose son was married to Jung Lu's daughter, Kang Yi,[1] Liao Shou-heng and Weng T'ung-ho, the Grand Secretary and ex-tutor to the Emperor. The Empress Dowager was still leading her life of dignified leisure at the Summer Palace, generally in company with her two confidential friends, the wife of Jung Lu and her adopted daughter, the Princess Imperial. By all accounts she was amusing herself with picnics on the K'un Ming lake, elaborate theatrical performances and excursions to the neighbouring temples and hill shrines, devoting her leisure from these pursuits to verse-making and painting, but keeping herself fully informed, through Kang Yi and Prince Li, of all that took place in the Forbidden City. Although leaving the conduct of State affairs to the Emperor, she occasionally visited the city for a day or two, while the Emperor, on his side, punctiliously repaired to the Summer Palace five or six times a month to pay his respects to the Old Buddha. Their relations at this period were outwardly friendly. Kuang-Hsü never failed to consult Her Majesty before the issue of any important Decree, and Tzŭ Hsi was usually most cordial in her manner towards him. She had, it is true, occasion to reprove him more than once on account of reports which reached her, through the eunuchs, of his violent temper and alleged bad treatment of his attendants, reports which

[1] Kang Yi was a bigoted reactionary and the arch instigator of the Boxer movement at the capital. Young China has carefully preserved one of his sayings of that time: "The establishment of schools and colleges has only encouraged Chinese ambitions and developed Chinese talent to the danger of the Manchu Dynasty: the students should therefore be exterminated without delay."

were probably instigated and exaggerated by Li Lien-ying for his own purposes. But Kuang-Hsü, as events subsequently proved, was fully aware of the iron hand in the velvet glove. Whenever the Empress came to Peking, he obeyed strictly the etiquette which required him reverently to kneel at the Palace gates to welcome her. When visiting her at the Summer Palace, he was not permitted to announce his arrival in person, but was obliged to kneel at the inner gate and there await the summons of admission from the Chief Eunuch. Li, who hated him, delighted in keeping him waiting, sometimes as much as half an hour, before informing the Old Buddha of his presence. At each of these visits he was compelled, like any of the Palace officials, to pay his way by large fees to the eunuchs in attendance on Her Majesty, and as a matter of fact, these myrmidons treated him with considerably less respect than they showed to many high Manchu dignitaries. Within the Palace precincts, the Son of Heaven was indeed regarded as of little account, so that the initiative and determination which he displayed during the hundred days of reforms in the summer of 1898 came as a disturbing surprise to many at Court and showed that, given an opportunity, he was not wholly unworthy of the Yehonala blood of his mother, Tzŭ Hsi's sister.

The official who had hitherto exercised most influence over the Emperor was Weng T'ung-ho, the Imperial tutor. He had only rejoined the Grand Council in November 1894, at the critical time when the disastrous opening of the war with Japan had brought about the dismissal of the former Council; but as Imperial tutor he had had the *entrée* of the Palace ever since the Emperor was five years old. He was the leader of the southern party in the capital. A native of Kiangsu (the birthplace of all the greatest scholars of China during the present Dynasty, and the centre of national culture), he hated the narrow conservatism of the Manchus, and included in his dislike the Chinese of the Metropolitan Provinces, whose politics and point of view were very similar to those of the Manchus. The strife between north and south really dated from the beginning

of Kuang-Hsü's reign. The two protagonists on the northern side were Hsü T'ung, a well-educated Chinese Bannerman (for all practical purposes, a Manchu at heart) who had been tutor to the Emperor T'ung-Chih; and Li Hung-tsao, a native of Chihli, who had joined the Grand Council at the same time as Weng T'ung-ho. The southern party was led by Weng T'ung-ho and P'an Tsu-yin, the latter a native of Soochow and a most brilliant scholar and essayist. It is necessary to dwell on this party strife and its development, because it was the first cause of the reform movement of 1898, of the subsequent resumption of the Regency by Tzŭ Hsi, and, eventually, of the Boxer rising.

For more than twenty years these four high officials had been colleagues in Peking, meeting one another constantly in social as well as official circles. Their literary arguments, in which the quick-witted southerners generally scored, were the talk of the capital. All four men bore good reputations for integrity, so that literary graduates entering official life were glad to become their *protégés;* but the adherents of the southern party were the more numerous. This fact aroused the jealousy of Li and Hsü, which grew until it found vent publicly at the metropolitan examination for the "Chin Shih," or Doctor's, degree in 1889, on which occasion Li was Grand Examiner and P'an Tsu-yin his chief Associate. P'an, whose duty it was to select the best essays, recommended a native of Kiangu for the high honour of *Optimus,* but Li declined to endorse his decision, and gave the award to a Chihli man. P'an thereupon openly accused Li of prejudice and unfairness towards the southerner, and twitted him besides on his second-rate scholarship.

At the time of Russia's seizure of Ili, in 1880, Hsü T'ung and Weng T'ung-ho were respectively Presidents of the Boards of Ceremonies and Works. At a conference of the highest officials, held in the Palace, Weng declared himself in favour of war with Russia, but Hsü, after promising to support him, left him in the lurch at the last moment, causing him discomfiture and loss of face. Hence, bitter

enmity between them, which increased in intensity when they became the leaders of the rival factions. Weng was also on bad terms with Jung Lu, who had never forgiven him for the part he played in 1880, when Weng denounced his impious *liaison* to the Empress Dowager and brought about his dismissal. Jung Lu, as a loyal Manchu, naturally favoured the northern faction and his personal feelings prompted him in the same direction.

The enmity between the rival parties increased steadily in the early 'nineties, and when Li and Weng were appointed to the Grand Council, in 1894, the Court itself became involved in their strife, the Empress siding with the north and the Emperor with the south. At that time people were wont to speak of the Li faction and the Weng faction, but later they came to be known as the Empress Dowager's party, irreverently nicknamed the "Old Mother set," and the Emperor's party, or "Small Lad's set." Both P'an and Li died in 1897. It was after the latter's death that Hsü T'ung began to instigate secret and sinister designs against the Emperor, whom he called a Chinese traitor. Hsü T'ung, having been tutor to T'ung Chih, naturally enjoyed considerable influence with the Empress, but Kuang-Hsü flatly refused to have him on the Grand Council. So great was his dislike for the old man that he only received him once in audience between 1887 and 1898. Hsü had a valuable ally in Kang Yi, who hated all Chinese, southerners and northerners alike, and whose influence was used effectively to sow dissension between Tzŭ Hsi and the Emperor. In 1897 Kang Yi urged the Emperor to give orders that the Manchu troops should be efficiently trained and equipped. Kuang-Hsü replied: "You persist, it seems, in the exploded idea that the Manchu soldiery are good fighting men. I tell you that they are absolutely useless." Kang Yi, highly incensed, promptly informed the Old Buddha and the Iron-capped Princes that the Emperor was the enemy of all Manchus, and was plotting to appoint Chinese to all high offices, a statement which naturally created a strong feeling against His Majesty at Court.

Even the foreign policy of the Empire felt the effects of this rivalry of the opposing parties in the capital. The Empress, the Manchus, and the Chinese Bannermen were in favour of coming to an understanding with Russia, while the Emperor, Weng, and the southern Chinese, inclined to a *rapprochement* with Japan, with a view to imitation of that country's successful reforms. Li Hung-chang counted for little at the time, the fact being that, owing to his alleged responsibility for the war with Japan, his opinions were at a discount; but such influence as he had was used against the Emperor's party. Prince Kung, the *doyen* of the Imperial family, to whose ripe judgment the Empress herself would yield at times, was the only high Manchu to maintain friendly relations with the Chinese party. A fine scholar himself, he had always admired Weng T'ung-ho's literary gifts; the war with Japan had been none of his seeking, and he had been recalled to the Grand Council, at the same time as Weng, after a retirement of fourteen years.

The fact is not generally known that Weng T'ung-ho was most anxious at this time to be sent as Special Envoy to the coronation of the Czar, for the reason that, realising the Empress Dowager's growing hostility towards himself, he wished to be out of harm's way in the crisis which he felt to be impending. By a Decree of 1895 Weng had been "excused from further attendance to instruct His Majesty at the Palace of Happy Education," so that he could no longer influence His Majesty, as heretofore, at all times and seasons, and his rivals were thus enabled successfully to misrepresent him.

Prince Kung, the head of the Grand Council, went on sick furlough at the beginning of 1898, afflicted with incurable lung and heart complaints. The Emperor accompanied the Empress Dowager on three occasions to visit him at his residence, and ordered the Imperial physicians to attend him. On the 10th day of the 4th Moon he died, and Tzŭ Hsi recorded her grief at his loss in a sympathetic Decree.

His death was a serious matter. On the one hand the

Manchu party lost in him its senior representative, an elder whose wise counsel had guided them, and a statesman whose influence had been steadily exercised against their tendencies towards an anti-Chinese and anti-foreign policy. As the last survivor of the sons of Tao-Kuang, he held, *vis-à-vis* the Empress Dowager, a position very different from that of the other princes, his contemporaries. It is probable that, had he survived, there would have been no Boxer rising. On the other hand, the Emperor had always deferred to Prince Kung's advice, and it was not until after his death that he embarked headlong on the reform schemes of K'ang Yu-wei and his associates, many of which the Prince, though no bigoted Conservative, would certainly have condemned. To Weng T'ung-ho also the loss was serious, as well he knew, for Prince Kung had been his best friend

It was shortly after the Prince's death that Weng recommended K'ang Yu-wei to the Emperor's notice, informing His Majesty that K'ang's abilities were far superior to his own. Weng undoubtedly hoped that K'ang would gain the Sovereign's favour and use it to assist the southern party against the Manchus, and especially against his arch enemies, Kang Yi and Hsü T'ung; but he certainly never anticipated that K'ang would go so far as to advise the Emperor to defy the Old Buddha herself, and to plot against her sacred person. His idea was simply to gain kudos and to strengthen his own position and that of his party. The Emperor accepted his recommendation of K'ang, and summoned the latter to audience on the 28th of the 4th Moon (14th June 1898).

Weng told his friend and colleague, Liao Shou-heng, that he would await the result of this audience before coming to a decision as to his own future movements. If K'ang Yu-wei made a good impression, he would remain in office; if not, he would resign. He added that if the usual gifts of the Dragon Festival were sent him by the Emperor, he would feel that there was no immediate danger in his position. All he asked was that he might escape the open hostility of the Empress Dowager, such as

had fallen upon the Cantonese Vice-President, Chang Yin-huan, whose dismissal was expected at any moment. As it happened, however, K'ang Yu-wei and his friends persuaded the Emperor to insist on retaining Chang Yin-huan in office, and for the next hundred days he became Kuang-Hsü's right-hand man, playing his part, foredoomed, while in the "deep seclusion of her Palace" the Old Buddha bided her time.

On the 20th of the 4th Moon, Weng T'ung-ho applied for a week's sick leave, a face-saving device which showed that he was aware of the impending storm. On the 23rd His Majesty issued the first of his Reform Decrees. He had duly conferred on the subject with the Empress at the Summer Palace, and had accorded a special audience to Jung Lu. Tzŭ Hsi assured him that she would raise no obstacles to his proposed policy, provided that the ancient privileges of the Manchus were not infringed; at the same time, she insisted on his getting rid of Weng T'ung-ho without delay, as he was instigating an anti-Manchu movement which, if it gained headway, might involve the Dynasty in ruin. Jung Lu strongly recommended to His Majesty a notable progressive, the son of Ch'en Pao-chen, Governor of Hupei. The fact is of interest because of the idea prevalent among Europeans, that Jung Lu was ever opposed to reform. Subsequent events compelled him to turn against the very man whom he now recommended, but this was not so much on account of a change in his views, as because the policy of the reformers had developed on unexpected and dangerous lines.

On the day following the issue of the first Reform Decree was proclaimed the result of what the Emperor fully intended to be the last examination under the old classical-essay system. The candidate originally selected for the high honour of Optimus was again a Kiangsu man, but the Empress herself altered the list and conferred the coveted distinction upon a native of Kueichou province, to mark her displeasure against the province which had given birth to Weng T'ung-ho. At the same time a Decree advised members of the Imperial Clan to seek

education in Europe; even Princes of the Blood were to be encouraged to go abroad and to investigate political conditions. Among the Manchus, the sensation created by these Decrees was very great; they felt that, for the first time in history, fundamental things were being challenged, the ancient bulwarks of the Dynastic privileges in danger. Had not Mencius himself said: "We have heard of Chinese ideas being employed to convert barbarians, but have never heard of China being converted by barbarians."

On the morning after the issue of the second Decree, Weng T'ung-ho, on return from his week's leave, proceeded as usual at 4 A.M. to the Summer Palace to attend the audience of the Grand Council. He was met by one of the Secretaries to the Council who, handing him an Imperial Decree, informed him of his dismissal. It was Tzŭ Hsi's first open move on behalf of the Manchu party, and a clear admission of tutelage on the part of the Emperor.

Another Decree proved even more plainly that the Emperor was completely under Tzŭ Hsi's orders; it directed that all officials above the second rank should thenceforward return thanks to Her Majesty in person upon receiving appointments. This was a new departure, for, since the war with Japan, she had ceased to hold daily audiences, receiving officials only on her birthday and other State occasions. Another Decree of the same day transferred Jung Lu to Tientsin as Viceroy of Chihli. He and K'ang Yu-wei were received in audience next morning. To Jung Lu the Emperor gave orders to reorganise the forces in Chihli, adding that he looked to him for loyal co-operation in the reform movement. The audience to K'ang Yu-wei, first of many similar interviews (but the only one recorded in the official Gazette), lasted several hours. K'ang deeply disliked and feared Tzŭ Hsi, and from the outset he did his best to prejudice the Emperor against her. He reiterated his opinion that her sympathy for reform was merely a feint, and he roundly denounced her wanton extravagance and dissipated life at the Summer Palace. He described the unpopularity of the Manchu rule

in the south as chiefly due to the people's contempt for Her Majesty, and compared her private life to that of the notorious Empress Wu of the T'ang Dynasty. He advised Kuang-Hsü to relegate her permanently to retirement, she being the chief obstacle to reform. The Emperor fell speedily and completely under K'ang's influence, and none of his subsequent Edicts was issued without K'ang's assistance. In the light of later knowledge, and of almost universal Chinese opinion on this subject, it is difficult to acquit K'ang Yu-wei of personal and interested motives, of a desire to wield power in the State as the result of his influence over the Emperor, whose emotional pliability he made to serve his own ends. Looked at in this light, his denunciations of the Empress Dowager and Jung Lu were evidently less the outcome of patriotic indignation than of his recognition of the fact that, so long as Tzŭ Hsi remained in power, his ambitions could never be achieved, nor his own position secured.

XI

THE HUNDRED DAYS OF REFORM

IMMEDIATELY following upon K'ang Yu-wei's first audience, Reform Decrees followed one another in rapid succession. The old examination system which had been in force, with one brief intermission (in K'ang-Hsi's reign), since the days of the Sung Dynasty, was definitely abolished. For the future, said the Emperor, papers on practical subjects were to be set at the public examinations, and while the classics were to remain as a basis for the literary curriculum, candidates for the public service would be expected to display a knowledge of the history of other countries and of contemporary politics. It was at this juncture that the President of the Board of Rites, Hsü Ying-k'uei (who, though a Cantonese, was a stalwart Conservative), was denounced by the Censors Sung Po-lu and Yang Shen-hsiu for obstructing the decreed reforms. They begged the Emperor to "display his divine wrath by immediately reducing Hsü to the rank of a fourth class official as a warning to other offenders." "We have noted," they said, "Your Majesty's zeal in the cause of reform and Your gracious desire to promote improved education and friendly relations with foreign Powers. The Board of Rites is in charge of all the colleges in the Empire and the Tsungli Yamên directs our policy. Hsü Ying-k'uei, President of the Board of Rites and a Minister of the Tsungli Yamên, is a man of second-rate ability, arrogant, ignorant, and hopelessly obstinate. Your Majesty, being deeply conscious of the vital need for permanent and radical reform, and anxious to encourage men of talent, has instituted a special examination in political economy, but Hsü Ying-ku'ei has dared to cast disparagement on Your Majesty's orders and has openly stated that

such an examination is a useless innovation. It is his intention to allow as few candidates as possible to pass this examination so as to render it unpopular. He is similarly opposing everyone of Your Majesty's proposed reforms. He vilifies western learning in conversation with his *protégés,* and is the sworn foe of all progressive scholars. Your Majesty's chief complaint is that such scholars are too few in number, but Hsü Ying-ku'ei's chief hope is to suppress the few there are.

"In the Tsungli Yamên a single phrase wrongly expressed may well precipitate a war; so important are the duties there to be performed that no one unacquainted with foreign affairs, and the ways of those who seek to injure us, can possibly render effective service to the State. Hsü Ying-ku'ei is far from being a distinguished Chinese scholar; nevertheless he despises European learning. His boundless conceit is a menace to our country's interests and dignity. It seems to us a monstrous thing that a man of this stamp should be employed at the Tsungli Yamên, and that his removal from the Board would be of incalculable benefit. He deserves to be removed from office for blocking reform and impeding the execution of Your Majesty's plans, if only as a warning to reactionary officials, who are all a danger to their country. If Your Majesty will reduce him to the fourth official rank we shall escape the ridicule of foreign nations, and the cause of reform will be greatly advanced."

On receipt of the above Memorial, Kuang-Hsü commanded Hsü Ying-ku'ei to submit a personal explanation of his conduct. Hsü complied in a Memorial which fiercely denounced K'ang Yu-wei. The Emperor was greatly incensed by this outspoken document, but could not as yet summon up courage to offend the Empress Dowager by dismissing from office one who enjoyed her favour and protection. Tzŭ Hsi perused both Memorials and was secretly impressed by Hsü's warning in regard to the revolutionary tendencies of the reformers. From that day, though openly unopposed to reform, she became suspicious of K'ang's influence over the Emperor, but preferred to

bide her time, never doubting that, at a word from her, Kuang-Hsü would dismiss him. She gave a special audience to Wang Wen-shao, who had come from Tientsin after handing over the Chihli Viceroyalty to Jung Lu. Wang stoutly supported Hsü Ying-ku'ei's attitude of caution in regard to several of the Emperor's proposed measures. Following upon this audience, the Emperor issued a Decree permitting Hsü to retain his posts, but warning him to show more energy in future both at the Board of Rites and at the Tsungli Yamên. Hsü regarded this as a decided triumph, due to Tzŭ Hsi's protection, and became more than ever opposed to innovations; this attitude was strengthened when Huai Ta Pu, his Manchu colleague at the Board of Rites and a first cousin of Tzŭ Hsi, came out as a strong supporter of the ultra-Conservatives.

The Emperor's next Decree provided for the reorganisation of the effete Manchu troops of the Metropolitan Province and for the founding of colleges and high schools in the provinces, to correspond to the Peking University.

A reactionary Memorial by the Censor Wen T'i[1] charged his colleagues Sung Po-lu and Yang Shen-hsiu with making their personal jealousy of Hsü Ying-ku'ei an excuse for deluding the Emperor and setting him at variance with the Empress Dowager. This greatly angered His Majesty, who promptly had the offender dismissed from the Censorate for stirring up that very party strife which his Memorial professed to denounce. Wen T'i, thus rebuked, induced Huai Ta Pu to go out to the Summer Palace and endeavour to enlist the Old Buddha's sympathy in his behalf. She, however, declined to move in the matter, having at the moment no specific ground of complaint against the Emperor and preferring to give the Progressives all the rope they wanted; but she caused Yü Lu, one of her old *protégés,* to be appointed to the Grand Council, and this official kept her regularly informed of

[1] In 1901, this official begged Tzŭ Hsi, just before her departure from K'ai-Feng fu for Peking, not to return thither, on the ground that her Palace had been polluted by the presence of the foreign barbarians.

everything that occurred in Peking. He belonged to the Kang Yi faction of extremists and disapproved of reform with all the dogged stupidity of his class. Later, in 1900, as Viceroy of Chihli, he rendered no little assistance to Kang Yi's schemes for massacring all foreigners, and was a noted leader of the Boxer movement. With three reactionaries on the Council of the stamp of Kang Yi, Wang Wen-shao and Yü Lu, there was small chance of any genuine opportunity or honest purpose of reform, whatever the Emperor might choose to decree, but before the Conservatives could assume the offensive, they had to win over Tzŭ Hsi definitely and openly to their side, and with her Jung Lu.

At about this time Kuang-Hsü reprimanded another Censor for a trifling error in caligraphy, the incorrect writing of a character.[1] Nevertheless, a week later, a Decree was issued, clearly showing the influence of K'ang Yu-wei in which it was ordered that caligraphy should no longer form a special subject at the public examinations. "In certain branches of the public service neat handwriting was no doubt of great value, but it would in future be made the subject of special examinations for the appointment of copyists."

On the 8th day of the 6th Moon, a Decree ordered arrangements to be made for the publication of official Gazettes all over the Empire, and K'ang Yu-wei was placed in charge of the Head Office at Shanghai. These Gazettes were to be official newspapers, and their object was the extension of general knowledge. They were to receive Government subsidies; copies were to be regularly submitted for the Emperor's perusal; opinions were to be freely expressed, and all abuses fearlessly exposed. K'ang Yu-wei was directed to draw up Press regulations in this sense.

On the 23rd of the 6th Moon, another vigorous Decree exhorted the official class to turn its attention seriously to

[1] The Emperor prided himself on being a great stickler in such matters, and many of the younger officials feared him on account of his quick temper and martinet manner in dealing with them.

reforms. Herein the Emperor declared that the procrastination hitherto displayed was most disheartening. "Stagnation," said the Edict, "is the sign of grave internal sickness; hopeless abuses are bred from this palsied indifference. An earnest reformer like Ch'en Pao-chen, the Governor of Hupei, becomes a target for the violent abuse of officials and gentry. Henceforward I would have you all sympathise with my anxiety and work earnestly together, so that we may profit by our past reverses and provide for a brighter future."

Another Decree ordered the institution of naval colleges as a step preliminary to the reconstruction of China's fleet. Railway and mining bureaus were established in Peking, and the Cantonese reformer, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, was given charge of a Translation Department, to publish standard foreign works on political economy and natural science, a grant of one thousand taels per mensem being allowed to cover his expenses.

But an innovation more startling than all these, broke upon the upholders of the old *régime* in a Decree issued in response to a Memorial by Jung Lu, who was all in favour of reform in military matters. It was therein announced that the Emperor would escort the Empress Dowager by train to Tientsin on the 5th day of the 9th Moon, and there hold a review of the troops. The Conservatives were aghast at the idea of their Majesties travelling by train, but Tzŭ Hsi, who had always enjoyed riding on the miniature railway in the Winter Palace, was delighted at the prospect of so novel an excursion. But if Manchu propriety was shocked at this proposal, a still heavier blow was dealt it by the next Decree, which abolished a number of obsolete and useless Government offices and sinecures, fat jobs which, for generations, had maintained thousands of idlers in the enjoyment of lucrative squeezes, a burden on the State.

This Decree was loudly denounced as contrary to the traditions of the Manchu Dynasty, and from all sides came urgent appeals to the Old Buddha to protect the privileges of the ruling class, and to order its cancellation. Yet

another bolt fell two days later, when all the high officials of the Board of Rites, including Hsü Ying-ku'ei and the Empress Dowager's kinsman, Huai Ta Pu, were summarily cashiered for having suppressed a Memorial by the Secretary, Wang Chao. In this document it was suggested that the Emperor, in company with the Empress Dowager, should travel abroad, beginning with Japan and concluding with a tour in Europe. Realising that "the craft of Demetrius was in danger," nearly all the Conservatives holding high office proceeded in a body to the Summer Palace and told the Empress Dowager that the only hope of saving the country lay in her resumption of the supreme power. The Old Buddha bade them wait—the sands were running out, but she was not yet ready to move.

K'ang Yu-wei, realising that there was danger ahead, took advantage of what he mistook for indecision on the part of Tzŭ Hsi to induce the Emperor to rebel against her authority. Once more he assured Kuang-Hsü that her professed sympathy for reform was all a sham, and that, on the contrary, it was she herself who was the chief obstacle to China's awakening, her influence being really the prime factor in the country's corruption and lethargy. Why should she be permitted to waste millions of Government funds yearly in the upkeep of her lavish establishment at the Summer Palace? He advised the Emperor by a *coup de main* to surround her residence, seize her person, and confine her for the rest of her days on a certain small island in the Winter Palace lake. Thereafter he should issue a Decree recounting her many misdeeds and proclaiming his intention never again to permit her to have any part in the Goverment. This conversation was held in a private apartment of the Palace, but there is every reason to believe that it was reported to Tzŭ Hsi by one of the eunuch spies employed by Li Lien-ying for that purpose. The Emperor foolishly allowed himself to be led into approval of this plot, but decided to await the Court's proposed trip to Tientsin before putting it into execution. He knew that to ensure success for the scheme he must be able to command the services of the troops,

and he realised that so long as Jung Lu was in command of the foreign-drilled forces of Chihli, he would never consent to their lifting a finger against his life-long benefactress. Herein, in the Emperor's opinion, lay the main obstacle that confronted him. The real danger, that lay in Tsŭ Hsi's enormous personal influence and fertility of resource he appears to have under-rated, mistaking her inaction for indecision.

For the moment he continued to issue new Edicts, one ordering the making of macadamised roads in Peking, another the enrolment of militia for purposes of national defence, while a third authorised Manchus to leave Peking, should they so wish, to earn their living in the provinces. On the 27th of the 7th Moon, appeared the last of his important Reform Decrees—a document pathetic in the light of subsequent events.

"In promoting reforms, we have adopted certain European methods, because, while China and Europe are both alike in holding that the first object of good government should be the welfare of the people, Europe has travelled further on this road than we have, so that, by the introduction of European methods, we simply make good China's deficiencies. But our Statesmen and scholars are so ignorant of what lies beyond our borders that they look upon Europe as possessing no civilisation. They are all unaware of those numerous branches of western knowledge whose object it is to enlighten the minds and increase the material prosperity of the people. Physical well-being and increased longevity of the race are thereby secured for the masses.

"Is it possible that I, the Emperor, am to be regarded as a mere follower after new and strange ideas because of my thirst for reform? My love for the people, my children, springs from the feeling that God has confided them to me and that to my care they have been given in trust by my illustrious Ancestors. I shall never feel that my duty as Sovereign is fulfilled until I have raised them all to a condition of peaceful prosperity. Moreover, do not the foreign Powers surround our Empire, committing frequent acts of aggression? Unless we learn and adopt the sources of their strength, our plight cannot be remedied. The cause of my anxiety is not fully appreciated by my people, because the reactionary element deliberately misrepresents my objects, spreading the while baseless rumours so as to disturb the minds of men. When I reflect how deep is

the ignorance of the masses of the dwellers in the innermost parts of the Empire on the subject of my proposed reforms, my heart is filled with care and grief. Therefore do I hereby now proclaim my intentions, so that the whole Empire may know and believe that their Sovereign is to be trusted and that the people may co-operate with me in working for reform and the strengthening of our country. This is my earnest hope. I command that the whole of my Reform Decrees be printed on Yellow paper and distributed for the information of all men. The District Magistrates are henceforward privileged to submit Memorials to me through the Provincial Viceroys, so that I may learn the real needs of the people. Let this Decree be exhibited in the front hall of every public office in the Empire so that all men may see it."

But the sands had run out. Tzŭ Hsi now emerged from "the profound seclusion of her Palace" and Kuang-Hsŭ's little hour was over.

XII

THE *COUP D'ETAT* OF 1898

In August 1898—at the end of the 7th Moon—the position of affairs in the Palace (known only to a few) was that the Empress Dowager had been won over to the reactionary party; she was postponing a decisive step, however, until she and the Emperor made their proposed visit to Tientsin in the 9th Moon. It was her intention there to confer with Jung Lu before resuming the Regency, because of the unmistakable hostility towards her then prevailing in the southern provinces, which she wished to allay, as far as possible, by avoiding any overt measures of usurpation until her preparations were made. On the 1st of the 8th Moon, the Emperor, who was then in residence at the Summer Palace, received in audience Yüan Shih-k'ai, the Judicial Commissioner of Chihli, and discussed with him at great length the political needs of the Empire. Yüan (then in his fortieth year) had owed his rapid advancement to the protection of the great Viceroy Li Hung-chang; nevertheless, among his rivals and enemies there were many who attributed the disastrous war with Japan in 1894 to his arbitrary conduct of affairs as Imperial Resident in Corea. There is no doubt that his reports and advice on the situation at Seoul precipitated, if they did not cause, the crisis, leading the Chinese Government to despatch troops into the country in the face of Japan's desire and readiness for war, and thus to the extinction of China's sovereignty in the Hermit Kingdom; but the fact had not impaired Yüan's personal prestige or his influence at Court. As a result of this audience the Emperor was completely won over by Yüan's professed interest in the cause of reform, and was convinced that in him he had secured a powerful supporter. His Majesty

had already realised that he must now reckon with the Old Buddha's uncompromising opposition; quite recently she had severely rebuked him for even noticing K'ang Yu-wei's suggestion that he should act more on his own authority. Jung Lu, he knew, would always loyally support his Imperial mistress; and there was not one prominent Manchu in the Empire, and, as far as Peking was concerned, hardly a Chinese, who would dare to oppose the Old Buddha, if once she declared herself actively on the side of reaction. The only two high officials in Peking on whom he could confidently reckon for sympathy and support were the Cantonese Chang Yin-huan, and Li Tuan-fen, a native of Kueichou. But if he could obtain control of the Northern foreign-drilled army, the reactionary party might yet be overthrown. To secure this end it was essential that Jung Lu, the Governor-General of Chihli and Commander-in-Chief of the foreign-drilled forces, should be put out of the way, and this before the Empress could be warned of the plot. The Emperor therefore proposed to have Jung Lu put to death in his Yamên at Tientsin, and then swiftly to bring a force of 10,000 of his disciplined troops to the capital, who would confine the Empress Dowager to the Summer Palace. At the same time the most prominent reactionaries in Peking, *i.e.* Kang Yi, Yü Lu, Huai Ta Pu and Hsü Ying-ku'ei were to be seized at their residence and hurried off to the prison of the Board of Punishments. This was the scheme suggested by K'ang Yu-wei, the Censor Yang Shen-hsiu, and the secretaries of the Grand Council, T'an Ssu-t'ung, Lin-Hsü, Yang Jui, and Liu Kuang-ti. At this first audience Yüan Shih-k'ai was informed of the Emperor's determination to maintain and enforce his reform policy, and was asked whether he would be loyal to his sovereign if placed in command of a large force of troops. "Your servant will endeavour to recompense the Imperial favour," he replied, "even though his merit be only as a drop of water in the ocean or a grain of sand in the desert; he will faithfully perform the service of a dog or a horse while there remains breath in his body."

Completely reassured by Yüan's words and earnest manner and his apparently genuine zeal for reform, the Emperor straightway issued the following Decree:—

"At the present time army reform is of all things most essential, and the judicial commissioner of Chihli, Yüan Shih-k'ai, is an energetic administrator and thoroughly earnest in the matter of training our forces. We therefore accord him the rank of Expectant Vice-President of a Board and place him in special charge of the business of army reform. He is to memorialise from time to time regarding any measures which he may desire to introduce. Under the present conditions of our Empire it is of the first importance that our defences be strengthened, and it behoves Yüan Shih-k'ai therefore to display all possible energy and zeal in the training of our troops, so that an efficient army may be organised, and the Throne's determination to secure homogeneous forces be loyally supported."

At this first audience there had been no mention of the proposed removal of Jung Lu. Scarcely had Yüan left the Jen Shou (Benevolent Old Age) Palace Hall, than the Empress Dowager summoned him to her own apartments, and closely questioned him as to what the Emperor had said. "By all means let the army be reformed," said the Old Buddha; "the Decree is sensible enough, but His Majesty is in too great a hurry, and I suspect him of cherishing some deep design. You will await a further audience with him, and then receive my instructions."

The Empress then sent for the Emperor, and informed him that he must have K'ang Yu-wei placed under arrest for speaking disrespectfully of her private life and morals. She refrained from informing him that she knew of his design to deprive her of power, and she was so far unaware of the extent of the plot against herself and Jung Lu. She reproached him, however, in general terms for his evident and increasing lack of filial duty towards herself. The Emperor meekly promised to comply with her wishes as to K'ang Yu-wei's arrest, but late that same evening, while the Empress Dowager was entertaining herself at a water picnic on the K'un Ming Lake, he despatched his confidential eunuch, Sung Yu-lien, into Peking with the following Decree, drafted in His Majesty's own unformed and childish handwriting:—

"On a previous occasion we commanded the Secretary of the Board of Works, K'ang Yu-wei, to take charge of the Government Gazette Bureau at Shanghai. We learn with astonishment that he has not yet left Peking. We are well aware of the crisis through which the Empire is passing, and have been anxious on this account to obtain the services of men well versed in political economy, with whom to discuss improved methods of government. We granted one audience to K'ang Yu-wei (*sic*: as a matter of fact K'ang was received by His Majesty on several occasions) because of his special knowledge, and we appointed him to take charge of the Government Gazette Bureau for the reason that newspapers are one of the most important factors in national education and progress. His duties are evidently of no light responsibility, and funds having been specially raised for this enterprise, we command him now to betake himself with all despatch to Shanghai; he shall on no account procrastinate any longer."

K'ang Yu-wei received the Decree, realised its significance, and left Peking by the first train next morning, arriving safely at Tongku, where he boarded a coasting steamer for Shanghai.[1] When the Empress heard of his departure she was furious, and telegraphed to Jung Lu to arrest K'ang, but for some unexplained reason (the instructions reached him before K'ang could have arrived at Tientsin) Jung Lu took no steps to do so. At this time he was unaware of the plot against his life, or he would hardly have shown such magnanimity. K'ang Yu-wei never gave him any credit for it and has always denounced Jung Lu as second only in villainy to the Empress Dowager, an arch enemy of reform and reformers. As a matter of fact Jung Lu was one of the high officials who originally recommended K'ang to the notice of the Emperor, and till the day of his death he always alluded to himself jocularly as one of the *K'ang T'ang*, or K'ang Yu-wei party, to the great amusement of the Old Buddha, who would jokingly ask him what news he had of his friend K'ang, the traitor and rebel. That morning, the 2nd of the Moon, audience was given to the reformer Lin Hsü and to Yüan Shih-k'ai, who again assured the Emperor of his complete devotion. His Majesty then left for the For-

[1] K'ang's subsequent escape under British protection, in which one of the writers was instrumental, is graphically described in despatch No. 401 of Blue Book No. 1 of 1899.

bidden City, intending to carry out his plans against the Empress from there rather than from the Summer Palace, where nearly every eunuch was a spy in her service.

It is evident that, so far, the Emperor by no means despaired of his chances of success, as two Decrees were issued next morning, one ordering the teaching of European languages in the public schools, and the other requiring purer administration on the part of district magistrates.

On the morning of the 5th, Yüan Shih-k'ai had a final audience, before leaving for Tientsin. His Majesty received him in the Palace of Heavenly Purity (Ch'ien Ch'ing Kung) of the Forbidden City. Every precaution was taken to prevent the conversation being overheard. Seated for the last time on the great lacquered Dragon Throne, so soon to be reoccupied by the Empress Dowager, in the gloomy throne room which the morning light could scarcely penetrate, His Majesty told Yüan Shih-k'ai the details of the commission with which he had decided to entrust him. He was to put Jung Lu to death and then, returning immediately to the capital with the troops under his command, to seize and imprison the Empress Dowager. The Emperor gave him a small arrow, the symbol of his authority to carry out the Imperial orders, and bade him proceed with all haste to Tientsin, there to arrest Jung Lu in his Yamên and see to his instant decapitation. Kuang Hsü also handed him a Decree whereby, upon completion of his mission, he was appointed Viceroy of Chihli *ad interim*, and ordered to Peking for further audience.

Yüan promised faithful obedience, and, without speaking to anyone, left Peking by the first train. Meantime the Old Buddha was due to come in from the I-ho Yüan to the Winter Palace that morning at 8 o'clock, to perform sacrifice at the altar to the God of Silkworms, and the Emperor dutifully repaired to the Ying Hsiu Gate of the Western Park, where the Lake Palace is situated, to receive Her Majesty as she entered the precincts.

Yüan reached Tientsin before noon, and proceeded at once to Jung Lu's Yamên. He asked Jung Lu whether he

regarded him as a faithful blood brother. (The two men had taken the oath of brotherhood several years before.) "Of course I do," replied the Viceroy. "You well may, for the Emperor has sent me to kill you, and instead, I now betray his scheme, because of my loyalty to the Empress Dowager and of my affection for you." Jung Lu, apparently unaffected by the message, merely expressed surprise that the Old Buddha could have been kept in ignorance of all these things, and added that he would go at once to the capital and see the Empress Dowager that same evening. Yüan handed him the Emperor's Decree, and Jung Lu, travelling by special train, reached Peking soon after 5 P.M.

He went directly to the Lake Palace, and entered the Empress's residence, boldly disregarding the strict etiquette which forbids any provincial official from visiting the capital without a special summons by Edict, and the still stricter rules that guard the *entrée* of the Palace. Unushered he entered the Empress's presence, and kotowing thrice, exclaimed, "Sanctuary, Your Majesty!" "What sanctuary do you require in the Forbidden precincts, where no harm can come to you, and where you have no right to be?" replied the Old Buddha. Jung Lu proceeded to lay before her all the details of the plot. Grasping the situation and rising immediately to its necessities with the courage and masculine intelligence that enabled her to overcome all obstacles, she directed him to send word secretly to the leaders of the Conservative party, summoning them to immediate audience in the Palace by the Lake. (The Emperor was still in the Forbidden City.) In less than two hours the whole of the Grand Council, several of the Manchu princes and nobles (Prince Ch'ing, with his usual fine "flair" for a crisis, had applied for sick leave and was therefore absent) and the high officials of the Boards, including the two Ministers whom the Emperor had cashiered (Hsü Ying-ku'ei and Huai Ta Pu) were assembled in the presence of the Empress. On their knees, the assembled officials besought her to resume the reins of government and to save their

ancient Empire from the evils of a barbarian civilisation. It was speedily arranged that the guards in the Forbidden City should be replaced by men from Jung Lu's own corps, and that, in the meantime, he should return to his post in Tientsin and await further orders. The conference broke up at about midnight. The Emperor was due to enter the Chung Ho Hall of the Palace at 5.30 the next morning to peruse the litany drawn up by the Board of Rites, which he was to recite next day at the autumnal sacrifice to the Tutelary Deities. After leaving that hall, he was seized by the guards and eunuchs, conveyed to the Palace on the small island in the middle of the lake (the "Ocean Terrace") and informed that the Empress Dowager would visit him later. The following Decree was thereupon issued by the Empress Dowager in the Emperor's name:—

"The nation is now passing through a crisis, and wise guidance is needed in all branches of the public service. We ourselves have laboured diligently, night and day, to perform Our innumerable duties, but in spite of all Our anxious energy and care We are in constant fear lest delay should be the undoing of the country. We now respectfully recall the fact that Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Dowager has on two occasions since the beginning of the reign of H. M. T'ung-Chih, performed the functions of Regent, and that in her administrations of the Government she displayed complete and admirable qualities of perfection which enabled her successfully to cope with every difficulty that arose. Recollecting the serious burden of the responsibility We owe to Our ancestors and to the nation, We have repeatedly besought Her Majesty to condescend once more to administer the Government. Now she has graciously honoured Us by granting Our prayer, a blessing indeed for all Our subjects. From this day forth Her Majesty will transact the business of Government in the side hall of the Palace, and on the day after to-morrow We ourselves at the head of Our Princes and Ministers shall perform obeisance before Her in the Hall of Diligent Government. The Yamêns concerned shall respectfully make the arrangements necessary for this ceremonial. The words of the Emperor."

Another Decree followed close upon the above, cashiering the Censor Sung Po-lu, on the ground of his generally evil reputation and recommendation of bad characters (*i.e.*

Photo, Betines, Peking.

CIRCULAR THRONE HALL IN THE GROUNDS OF THE LAKE PALACE LOOTED BY ALLIED TROOPS IN 1900.

Photo, Betines, Peking.

PAVILION ON LAKE TO THE WEST OF FORBIDDEN CITY.

the reformer Liang Ch'i-ch'ao). The Empress had a special grudge against this Censor because he had ventured to impeach her morals in a recent memorial, but as he had taken no part in the conspiracy against her person she spared his life.

Tzŭ Hsi in due course proceeded to the "Ocean Terrace," accompanied only by Li Lien-ying, who had been ordered to replace the Emperor's eunuchs by creatures of his own. (Kuang Hsü's former attendants were either put to death or banished to the post roads.) A Manchu who heard an account of the interview from Duke Kuei Hsiang, Tzŭ Hsi's younger brother, is our authority for what occurred at this dramatic meeting. The Empress Dowager bluntly informed Kuang Hsü that she had decided to spare his life and, for the present at any rate, to allow him to retain the throne. He would, however, be kept henceforward under strict surveillance, and every word of his would be reported to her. As to his schemes of reform, which at first she had encouraged, little dreaming to what depths of folly his infatuate presumption would lead him, they would all be repealed. How dared he forget what great benefits he owed her, his elevation to the throne and her generosity in allowing him to administer the government, he a poor puppet, who had no right to be Emperor at all, and whom she could unmake at will? There was not, she said, a single Manchu in high place but wished his removal, and urged her to resume the Regency. True, he had sympathisers among the Chinese, traitors all; with them she would deal in due course. Kuang Hsü's secondary consort (the Chen Fei or Pearl Concubine, the only one of his wives with whom he seems to have been on affectionate terms) knelt then before Tzŭ Hsi, imploring her to spare the Emperor further reproaches. She actually dared to suggest that he was, after all, the lawful Sovereign and that not even the Empress Dowager could set aside the mandate of Heaven. Tzŭ Hsi angrily dismissed her from the Presence, ordering her to be confined in another part of the Palace, where she remained until, in 1900, there came an opportunity in which the

vindictive Empress took summary revenge on the presumptuous concubine.[1]

The Empress Consort, with whom Kuang Hsü was hardly on speaking terms, was commanded to remain with him. She, as Tzŭ Hsi's niece, could be trusted to spy upon the Emperor and report all his doings. He was allowed to see no one but her and the eunuchs in attendance, except in the presence of the Empress Dowager.

To the end of his life Kuang Hsü blamed Yüan Shih-k'ai, and him alone, for having betrayed him. To Yüan he owed his humiliation, the end of all his cherished plans of government and the eighteen months of solitary confinement which he had to endure on the "Ocean Terrace." Almost his last words, as he lay dying, were to bid his brothers remember his long agony and promise to be revenged upon the author of his undoing. Of Jung Lu he said that it was but natural that he should consider first his duty to the Empress Dowager and seek to warn her; and, after all, as he had planned Jung Lu's death, he could hardly expect from him either devotion or loyalty. The Old Buddha's resentment was also natural; he had plotted against her and failed. But Yüan Shih-k'ai had solemnly sworn loyalty and obedience. The Emperor never willingly spoke to him again, even when, as Viceroy of Chihli, Yüan came to the height of his power.

For three years Yüan lived in retirement, and under the constant shadow of fear; for the Emperor's brother, the Regent, kept his promise. Such were the intricate humanities of the inner circle around and about the Dragon Throne, the never-ending problem of the human equation as a factor in the destinies of peoples.

[1] She was thrown down a well, by Tzŭ Hsi's orders, as the Court prepared for flight after the entrance of the allied forces into Peking. (*Vide infra.*)

XIII

TZŬ HSI RESUMES THE REGENCY (1898)

KUANG HSÜ's reign was over; there remained to him only the Imperial title. He had had his chance; in the enthusiasm of youth and new ideas he had played a desperate game against the powers of darkness in high places, and he had lost. Once more, as after the death of T'ung-Chih, Tzŭ Hsi could make a virtue of her satisfied ambitions. She had given her nephew a free hand, she had retired from the field, leaving him to steer the ship of State: if he had now steered it into troublous and dangerous seas, if, by common consent, she were again called to take the helm, this was the doing of Heaven and no fault of hers. She could no more be blamed for Kuang Hsü's folly than for the vicious habits and premature death of her son, which had brought her back to power 23 years before. It was clear (and there were many voices to reassure her of the fact) that the stars in their courses were working for the continuance of her unfettered authority, and that any trifling assistance which she might have given them would not be too closely scrutinised.

Kuang Hsü's reign was over; but his person (frail, melancholy tenement) remained, and Tzŭ Hsi was never enamoured of half measures or ambiguous positions. From the day when the pitiful monarch entered his pavilion prison on the "Ocean Terrace," she began to make arrangements for his "mounting the Dragon" and "visiting the Nine Springs" in the orthodox classical manner, and for providing the Throne with another occupant whose youth, connections and docility would enable her to hold the Regency indefinitely. Nevertheless, because of the turbulent temper of the southern provinces and possible manifestations of Europe's curious sympathy with the

Emperor's Utopian dreams, she realised the necessity for proceeding with caution and decorum. It was commonly reported throughout the city in the beginning of October that the Emperor would die with the end of the Chinese year.

Kuang Hsü was a prisoner in his Palace, doomed, as he well knew; yet must he play the puppet Son of Heaven and perform each season's appointed posturings. On the 8th day of the 8th Moon he appeared therefore, as ordered by his attendants, and in the presence of his whole Court performed the nine prostrations and other proper acts of obeisance before Her Majesty Tzŭ Hsi, in recognition of his own nonentity and her supreme authority. In the afternoon, escorted by a strong detachment of Jung Lu's troops, he went from the Lake Palace to sacrifice at the Altar of the Moon. Thus, pending the *coup-de-grâce*, the wretched Emperor went through the empty ceremonies of State ritual; high priest, that was himself to be the next victim, how bitter must have been his thoughts as he was borne back with Imperial pomp and circumstance to his lonely place of humiliation!

Tzŭ Hsi then settled down to her work of government, returning to it with a zest by no means diminished by the years spent in retreat. And first she must justify the policy of reaction to herself, to her high officials, and the world at large. She must get rid of offenders and surround herself with men after her own heart.

A few days after the Autumn festival and the Emperor's melancholy excursion, Her Majesty proceeded to remind the Imperial Clansmen that their position would not protect them against the consequences of disloyalty; she was always much exercised (remembering the Tsai Yüan conspiracy) at any sign of intriguing amongst her Manchu kinsmen. In this case her warning took the form of a Decree in which she sentenced the "Beileh" Tsai Ch'u [1]

[1] It is interesting to note that this Manchu Prince (Tsai Ch'u) was released from prison by the Regent, the Emperor's brother, in January 1909, and was appointed to the command of one of the Manchu Banner Corps on the same day that Yüan Shih-K'ai was dismissed from the viceroyalty of Chihli. The Emperor's party, as opposed to the Yehonala Clan, heartily approved of his reinstatement

to perpetual confinement in the "Empty Chamber" of the Clan Court. Tsai Ch'u had had the audacity to sympathise with the Emperor's reform schemes; he had also had the bad luck to marry one of Tzŭ Hsi's nieces and to be upon the worst of terms with her. When therefore he advised the Emperor, in the beginning of the Hundred Days, to put a stop, once and for all, to the Old Buddha's interference in State affairs, the "mean one of his inner chamber" did not fail to report the fact to Her Majesty, and thus to enlist her sympathies and activities, from the outset, on the side of the reactionaries.

At the time immediately following the *coup d'état,* public opinion at the Capital was divided as to the merits of the Emperor's proposed reforms and the wisdom of their suppression, but the political instincts of the tribute-fed metropolis are, generally speaking, dormant, and what it chiefly respects is the energetic display of power. So that, on the whole, sympathy was with the Old Buddha. She had, moreover, a Bismarckian way of guiding public opinion, of directing undercurrents of information through the eunuchs and tea-house gossip, in a manner calculated to appeal to the instincts of the *literati* and the *bourgeois;* in the present instance stress was laid on the Emperor's lack of filial piety, as proved by his plotting against his aged and august aunt (a thing unpardonable in the eyes of the orthodox Confucianist), and on the fact that he enjoyed the sympathy and support of foreigners—an argument sufficient to damn him in the eyes of even the most progressive Chinese. It came, therefore, to be the generally accepted opinion that His Majesty had shown deplorable want of judgment and self-control, and that the Empress Dowager was fully justified in resuming control of the government. This opinion even came to be accepted and expressed by those Legations which had originally professed to see in the Emperor's reforms the dawn of a new era for China. So elastic is diplomacy in following the line of the least resistance, so adroit (in the absence of a policy of its own) in accepting and condoning any *fait accompli,* that it was not long before the official attitude of the Legations—including the British—had come

to deprecate the Emperor's unfortunate haste in introducing reforms, reforms which every foreigner in China had urged for years, and which, accepted in principle by the Empress since 1900, have again been welcomed as proof of China's impending regeneration. In June 1898, the British Minister had seen in the Emperor's Reform Edicts proof that "the Court had at last thoroughly recognised a real need for radical reform." [1] In October, when the Chief Reformer (K'ang Yu-wei) had been saved from Tzŭ Hsi's vengeance by the British Consul-General at Shanghai and conveyed by a British warship to the protection of a British Colony (under the mistaken impression that England would actively intervene in the cause of progress and on grounds of self-interest if not of humanity), we find the tide of expediency turned to recognition of the fact that "the Empress Dowager and the Manchu party were seriously alarmed for their own safety, and looked upon the Reform movement as inimical to Manchu rule"! [2] And two months later, influenced no doubt by the impending season of peace and good will, the Marquess of Salisbury is seriously informed by Sir Claude Macdonald that the wives of the foreign Representatives, seven in all, had been received in audience by the Empress Dowager on the anniversary of her sixty-fourth birthday, and that Her Majesty "made a most favourable impression, both by the personal interest she took in all her guests and by her courteous amiability." [3] On which occasion the puppet Emperor was exhibited, to comply with the formalities, and was made to shake hands with all the ladies. And so the curtain was rung down, and the Reform play ended, to the satisfaction of all (or nearly all) concerned.

Nevertheless, the British Minister and others, disturbed at the persistent rumours that "the Empress Dowager was about to proceed to extreme steps in regard to the Emperor," [4] went so far as to warn the Chinese Government against anything so disturbing to the European sense of fitness and decency. Foreign countries, the Yamên was told, would view with displeasure and alarm his sudden

[1] *Vide* Blue Book China No. 1 of 1899, letters Nos. 266, 401, and 426.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

demise. When the news of the British Minister's intervention became known in the tea-houses and recorded in the Press, much indignation was expressed: this was a purely domestic question, for which precedents existed in plenty and in which foreigners' advice was inadmissible. The Emperor's acceptance of new-fangled foreign ideas was a crime in the eyes of the Manchus, but his enlistment of foreign sympathy and support was hateful to Manchus and Chinese alike.

Matters soon settled down, however, into the old well-worn grooves, the people satisfied and even glad in the knowledge that the Old Buddha was once more at the helm. In the capital the news had been sedulously spread —in order to prepare the way for the impending drama of expiation—that Kuang Hsü had planned to murder Her Majesty, and his present punishment was therefore regarded as mild beyond his deserts.[1] Scholars, composing essays appropriate to the occasion, freely compared His Majesty to that Emperor of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 762) who had instigated the murdering of the Empress Dowager of his day. Kuang Hsü's death was therefore freely predicted and its effects discounted; there is no doubt that it would have caused little or no comment in the north of China, however serious its consequences might have been in the south. The public mind having been duly prepared, the Empress Dowager, in the name of the prospective victim, issued a Decree stating that the Son of Heaven was seriously ill; no surprise or apprehension was expressed, and the sending of competent physicians from the provinces to attend His Majesty was recognised as a necessary concession to formalities. "Ever since the 4th Moon," said this Decree (*i. e.* since the beginning of the hundred days of reform), "I have been grievously ill; nor can I find any alleviation of my sickness." It was the *pro formâ* announcement of his impending despatch, and as such it was received by the Chinese people.

[1] As an example of Chinese official methods: the Shanghai Taotai when requesting the British Consul-General's assistance to arrest K'ang Yu-wei, did not hesitate to say that the Emperor was dead, murdered by the Chief Reformer. *Vide* Blue Book No. 1 of 1899, letter No. 401.

But the sentence was not carried out. The Emperor lived to see the New Year and thereafter to regain his strength, a result due in some degree to the Empress Dowager's genuine fear of foreign intervention, but chiefly to her recognition of the strength of public opinion against her in the south of China and of the expediency of conciliating it. In the Kuang provinces there was no doubt of the bitterly anti-Manchu feeling aroused by the execution of the Cantonese reformers: these turbulent southerners were fierce and loud in their denunciations of the Manchus and all their works, and it would not have required much to fan the flames of a new and serious rebellion. The south was well aware, for news travels swiftly in China, that the Emperor's life was in danger and that the close of the year was the time fixed for his death, and from all sides protests and words of warning came pouring from the provinces to the capital, addressed not only to the metropolitan boards but to the Throne itself. Amongst these was a telegram signed by a certain Prefect of Shanghai named Ching Yüan-shan, who, in the name of "all the gentry, scholars, merchants and public of Shanghai," referred to the Edict which announced the Emperor's illness and implored the Empress, the Clansmen and the Grand Council to permit his sacred Majesty to resume the government "notwithstanding his indisposition," and to abandon all thoughts of his abdication. He described the province of Kiangsu as being in a state of suppressed ferment and frankly alluded to the probability of foreigners intervening in the event of the Emperor's death. Tzŭ Hsi was much incensed with this courageous official, not because he actually threatened her of premeditating murder, but because he dared threaten her with its consequences. She gave orders that he be summarily cashiered, whereupon, fearing further manifestations of her wrath, he fled to Macao. But his bold words undoubtedly contributed to saving the Emperor's life.

Of all the high provincial authorities, one only was found brave and disinterested enough to speak on behalf of the Emperor; this was Liu K'un-yi, the Viceroy of

Nanking. He was too big a man to be publicly rebuked at a time like this and Tzŭ Hsi professed to admire his disinterested courage; but she was highly incensed at his action, which contrasted strongly with the astute opportunism of his colleague, the scholarly magnate Chang Chih-tung, Viceroy of Wuch'ang, who had been an ardent advocate of the reformers so long as the wind blew fair in that quarter. Only six months before he had recommended several progressive (amongst them his own secretary, Yang Jui) to the Emperor's notice, and just before the storm burst he had been summoned to Peking by Kuang Hsü to support His Majesty's policy as a member of the Grand Council. No sooner had the Empress Dowager declared herself on the side of the reactionaries, however, and the Emperor had failed in his attempt to win over Yüan Shih-k'ai and his troops, than Chang telegraphed to the Old Buddha warmly approving her policy, and urging strong measures against the reformers. The advice was superfluous; Tzŭ Hsi, having put her hand to the plough, was not the woman to remove it before her work was well done.

On the 11th day of the 8th Moon, she summoned Jung Lu to the capital to assist her in stamping out the reform movement. The Board of Punishments had just sent in a memorial urging the appointment of an Imperial Commission for the trial of K'ang Yu-wei's colleagues. Tzŭ Hsi, in reply, directed them to act in consultation with the Grand Council and to cross-examine the prisoners "with the utmost severity." At the same time she ordered the imprisonment in the Board's gaol of Chang Yin-huan,[1]

[1] Chang Yin-huan, who had been created a Knight Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George in connection with Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebration, was subsequently put to death, after banishment to Turkestan. An order given by Prince Tuan at the commencement of the Boxer crisis was the immediate cause of his execution.

Another reformer named Hsü Chih-ching was condemned to imprisonment for life in the Board of Punishments under this same Decree; he was released by the Allies in August 1900, when he proceeded at once to T'ai-Yuan fu, and handed himself over to justice, disdaining to accept his release at the hands of foreigners. This incident is typical of the Chinese officials' attitude of mind and of their reverence for the Decrees of the head of the State.

the Emperor's trusted adviser and friend who, she observed, "bears an abominable reputation." This Edict took occasion to state that the Throne, anxious to temper justice with mercy, would refrain from any general proscription or campaign of revenge, "although fully aware that many prominent scholars and officials had allowed themselves to be corrupted by the reformers."

The Empress's next step, advised by Jung Lu, was to issue a Decree, in the name of the Emperor, in which she justified the policy of reaction and reassured the Conservative party. The document was an excellent example of her methods. While the Emperor was made to appear as convinced of the error of his ways, all blame for the "feelings of apprehension" created by the reform movement was relegated to "our officials' failure to give effect to our orders in the proper way," so that everybody's "face" was saved.

Shortly afterwards Jung Lu was raised to membership of the Grand Council, and given supreme command of the northern forces and control of the Board of War; he thus became the most powerful official in the Empire, holding a position for which no precedent existed in the annals of the Manchu Dynasty. He had once more proved loyal to the Empress and faithful to the woman whom he had served since the days of the flight to Jehol; and he had his reward. It was natural, if not inevitable, that the part played by Jung Lu in the crisis of the *coup d'état* should expose him to severe criticism, especially abroad; but, from the Chinese official's point of view, his action in supporting the Empress Dowager against her nephew, the Emperor, was nothing more than his duty, and as a statesman he showed himself consistently moderate, sensible, and reliable. The denunciations subsequently poured upon him by the native and foreign Press at the time of the Boxer rising were the result, partly of the unrefuted falsehoods disseminated by K'ang Yu-wei and his followers, and partly of the Legations' prejudice (thence arising) and lack of accurate information. As will hereafter be shown, all his efforts were directed towards stem-

ming the tide of that fanatical outbreak and restraining his Imperial mistress from acts of folly. Amidst the cowardice, ignorance and cruelty of the Manchu Clansmen his foresight and courage stand out steadily in welcome relief; the only servant of the Throne during Tzŭ Hsi's long rule who approaches him in administrative ability and disinterested patriotism is Tseng Kuo-fan. From this time forward until his death (1903) we find him ever at Tzŭ Hsi's right hand, her most trusted and efficient adviser; and her choice was well made. As will be seen in a later chapter, there was a time in 1900, when the Old Buddha, distraught by the tumult and the shouting, misled by her own hopes, her superstitious beliefs and the clamorous advice of her kinsfolk, allowed Prince Tuan and his fellow fanatics to undermine for a little while Jung Lu's influence. Nevertheless (as will be seen by the diary of Ching Shan) it was to him that she always turned, in the last resort, for counsel and comfort; it was on him that she leaned in the dark hour of final defeat,—and he never failed her. She lived to realise that the advice which he gave, and which she sometimes neglected, was invariably sound. Amidst all the uncertainties of recent Chinese history this much is certain, that the memory of Jung Lu deserves a far higher place in the esteem of his countrymen and of foreigners than it has hitherto received. Unaware himself of many of the calumnies that had been circulated about him at the time of the Court's flight, he was greatly hurt, and his sense of justice outraged, by the cold reception given him by the Legations after the Court's return to Peking. Thereafter, until his death, he was wont to say to his intimate friends that while he would never regret the stand he had taken against the Boxers, he could not understand or forgive the hostility and ingratitude shown him by foreigners. "It was not for love towards them," he observed, on one occasion recorded, "that he had acted as he did, but only because of his devotion to the Empress Dowager and the Manchu Dynasty; nevertheless, since his action had coincided with the interests of the foreigner, he was entitled to some credit for it."

The Empress Dowager consulted long and earnestly with Jung Lu as to the punishment to be inflicted upon the reformers. He advocated strong measures of repression, holding that the prestige of the Manchu Dynasty was involved. The six prisoners were examined by the Board of Punishments, and Jung Lu closely questioned them as to K'ang Yu-wei's intentions in regard to the Empress Dowager. Documents found in K'ang's house had revealed every detail of the plot; thereupon the Grand Council recommended the execution of all the prisoners. There being no doubt that they had been guilty of high treason against Her Majesty, it seemed clearly inadvisable to prolong the trial, especially as there was undoubtedly a risk of widening the breach between Manchus and Chinese by any delay in the proceedings, at a time when party spirit was running high on both sides. The Old Buddha concurred in the decision of the Grand Council, desiring to terminate the crisis as soon as possible; accordingly, on the 13th day of the Moon, the reformers were executed. They met their death bravely, their execution outside the city being witnessed by an immense crowd. It was reported that amongst the papers of Yang Jui were found certain highly compromising letters addressed to him by the Emperor himself, in which the Empress Dowager was bitterly denounced. There was also a Memorial by Yang impeaching Her Majesty for gross immorality and illicit relations with several persons in high positions, one of whom was Jung Lu; this document had been annotated in red ink by the Emperor himself. It quoted songs and ballads current in the city of Canton, referring to Her Majesty's alleged vicious practices, and warned the Emperor that, if the Manchu dynasty should come now to its end, the fault would lie as much with Tzŭ Hsi and her evil deeds as was the case when the Shang dynasty (of the 12th century B.C.) fell by reason of the Emperor Chou Hsin's infatuation for his concubine Ta Chi, whose orgies are recorded in history. Yang Jui had compared the Empress Dowager's life at the Summer Palace with the enormities committed by this infamous concubine in her palace

by the "Lake of Wine"; small wonder then, said Tzŭ Hsi's advocates in defence of drastic measures, that, having seen for herself in the Emperor's own handwriting, that these treasonable utterances met with his favour and support, Her Majesty was vindictively inclined and determined to put an end, once and for all, to his relations with the Reform party.

The Edict which ordered the execution of the Reform leaders was drafted by the Empress Dowager herself with the aid of Jung Lu, but with cynical irony it was issued in the name of the Emperor. It was written in red ink as an indication of its special importance, a formality usually reserved for decrees given by the Sovereign under his own hand. After laying stress upon the necessity for introducing reforms in the country's administration, and on the anxiety felt by the Throne in regard to the increasing difficulties of government, this Decree proceeded to state that K'ang Yu-wei and his followers, taking advantage of the necessities of the moment, had entered into a rebellious conspiracy, aiming at the overthrow of the Throne itself; fortunately, their treacherous intentions had been disclosed, and the whole plot revealed.

The Decree then proceeded to award the death penalty to K'ang Yu-wei's colleague, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, a scholar of the highest repute, who subsequently found a refuge in Japan, and there edited a newspaper of high and well-deserved reputation. Next in order of importance were the three Secretaries of the Grand Council, who were awaiting the result of their trial in the Board of Punishments. The Edict added that any delay in their execution might, in the opinion of the Grand Council, lead to a revolutionary movement, and for this reason further formalities of justice in regard to all six prisoners were dispensed with, and their summary decapitation ordered.

Despite the Throne's "all abounding clemency" and Tzŭ Hsi's declared intention to take no steps beyond the execution of the six reform leaders, her "divine wrath" continued to be stirred up by the recollection of the personal attacks that had been made against her. Following imme-

diately upon the Decree above mentioned, came another, whereby Chang Yin-huan was sentenced to banishment to the New Dominion on a vague charge of the usual classical type. His real offence lay in that he had denounced the Empress Dowager for extravagance, and she was the more embittered against him because the British Minister had presumed to intervene with a plea for his life.

In another Decree the proposed visit to Tientsin was cancelled, at the earnest request of Jung Lu, who dreaded the possibility of an attempt on the life of the Empress Dowager. Her feminine curiosity had been stirred by the prospect of a visit to the Treaty port and a change from the seclusion of Peking, but she yielded to the advice of the Commander-in-Chief. At the same time military reorganisation was pressed forward with the greatest energy, and the occasion was taken to bestow *largesse* on the Chihli troops.

Upon Jung Lu coming to Peking, Yü Lu was appointed to succeed him as Viceroy of Chihli. This bigoted official enjoyed in a large measure the confidence of the Empress Dowager. Unusually ignorant, even for a Manchu, and totally devoid of ability, he was subsequently responsible for the growth of the Boxer movement in and around Tientsin. At this particular crisis, however, distrust of the Chinese was rife, and the Old Buddha felt that the presence of a Manchu Viceroy to control the Metropolitan Province was necessary to prevent any organised movement by the revolutionaries.

By this time the violent measures of the reactionary party had aroused a storm of indignation in the South, where societies were being organised in support of His Majesty Kuang-Hsü. Newspapers published in the foreign settlements at Shanghai repeated daily the wildest and bitterest denunciations against Her Majesty and Jung Lu, the latter being specially singled out for attack. The writers of these articles, evidently inspired by the fugitive reform leaders, declared that the movement in Peking was essentially anti-Chinese, and that it would undoubtedly end in the appointment of Manchus to all important posts in the Empire. On

the other hand, anti-foreign disturbances were fomented in several provinces by those who believed that the Empress Dowager would be gratified by these manifestations of public feeling. This state of affairs was undoubtedly fraught with serious danger, to which the attention of the Empress Dowager was drawn in a very plain-spoken Memorial by a Censor and Imperial Clansman named Hui Chang.

The memorialist congratulated the Throne upon the energetic and successful suppression of K'ang Yu-wei's treason, an achievement which would redound for ever to the fame of the Old Buddha. He then referred to the general futility of Edicts, and advised that special honours should be accorded to a few selected Chinese of undoubted loyalty and orthodoxy, by which means public opinion would be reassured. He justly observed that, if those who had been guilty of high treason had been made to suffer the penalty, those who had been consistently loyal should be suitably rewarded. He advised that all those who, during the past few months, had sent in Memorials denouncing the reform movement and rebuking the corrupt tendencies of the so-called new scholarship, should be advanced in the public service. Finally, he made the significant observation, that loyalty and patriotism when displayed by Chinese subjects were of greater value to the integrity of the Empire than these virtues when displayed by Manchus, an indication of statecraft likely to appeal to the acute intelligence of the Old Buddha. The Empress Dowager's reply, while ostensibly in the nature of a rebuke, was marked by unusual evasiveness on the subject actually at issue. She laid stress only on the strict impartiality of the Throne's decision, professing to be animated by feelings of abstract justice, and to be free from all manner of prejudice, whether against Manchus or Chinese. The Memorialist was, however, shortly afterwards promoted, and as proof of her impartiality, the Empress Dowager proceeded, on the same day, to dismiss half-a-dozen high officials, one of whom was a Manchu; and on the ground that Jung Lu himself had recommended one of the re-

formers for employment, she ordered that he too be referred to the Board of Civil Appointments for the determination of a suitable penalty. This was merely "saving face."

Stirred, as usual, to activity by anything in the nature of criticism, Her Majesty now issued Decrees in rapid succession. One of these declared the necessity for adequate protection of foreigners in the interior and for the Legations in Peking; another took the form of a homily to the Provincial Authorities in regard to the selection of subordinate officials. A third called for advice from the Provincial Viceroys and Governors, but they were told, at the same time, to avoid criticising on party grounds because "the Throne was fully aware of the motives which usually inspire such attacks."

Subsequently, the Empress Dowager took occasion in a homily on the whole art of government, to place on record a defence of her policy as head of the Manchus in China. The following extract from this Decree is worth quoting :—

"The test of good government has always been the absence of rebellion; a State which takes adequate measures for self-defence can never be in serious danger. By the accumulated wisdom of six successive Sovereigns, our dynasty has succeeded in establishing a system of government, based on absolute justice and benevolence, which approaches very nearly to perfection. It has been our pleasure to grant immediate relief in times of flood and famine. When rivers burst their banks, our first thought has ever been the safety of our people. Never have we resorted to conscription, or to the levying of *corvées*. We have always excluded Chinese women from service as subordinates in the Palace. Surely such evidences of benevolent solicitude merit the hearty co-operation of all our subjects, and entitle us to expect that all our people, high and low, should peacefully pursue their business in life, so that all men, even the humblest labourers, may enjoy the blessings of peace. Is it any wonder then, that our soul is vexed when abominable treachery and the preaching of rebellion have been permitted to exist and to be spread broad-cast; when high officials, lacking all proper principles, have dared to recommend traitors to the Throne, in furtherance of their own evil designs? When we think of these things, our righteous indignation almost overwhelms us; nevertheless, we have granted a general amnesty, and will enquire no further into these base plottings."

The Decree concluded with the usual exhortation to the official class, and an appeal for the exercise of ideal virtue.

Her Majesty's next step was to reinstate certain leading reactionaries, whom the Emperor had recently dismissed, notably Hsü Ying-k'uei, who had denounced the reformer Wang Chao. The Emperor's party was now completely broken up, and he was left without supporters or friends in Peking. The Manchu Treasurer of Kansuh (Tseng Ho) was the last high official to speak in favour of the reform movement, or rather of one of its chief advocates, and, by so doing, to bring down upon him the wrath of the Old Buddha. The Memorial which brought about his summary dismissal from office, never again to be re-employed, referred in terms of regret to the disgrace of Weng T'ung-ho, the Emperor's tutor.

Her Majesty next turned her attention to the provinces, and administered a severe rebuke to Liu K'un-yi, who, on grounds of ill-health, had asked to be relieved of the Nanking Viceroyalty. Her Majesty, reminding him in the classical phraseology of the high favours showered upon him by the Throne, directed him to abstain from frivolous excuses and to continue in the performance of his duties, exercising more diligence therein, and more care in his selection of subordinate officials.

The audacity of Weng T'ung-ho continued to rankle sorely in Her Majesty's mind, and to allow him to continue to live in honourable retirement in his native place without loss of rank or other punishment was not in accordance with her ideas of fitness; nor was it likely that Jung Lu, who had always borne a grudge against the Imperial tutor, would do anything to mitigate her wrath against him. In a Decree, issued in the name of the Emperor, she once more vented her spite on this aged and inoffensive scholar, in a manner highly characteristic of her temperament, and ordered that he be cashiered, never again to be re-employed, and that henceforth he be held under close supervision of the local authorities and prohibited from creating trouble, as a warning to all double-minded officials for the future." [1]

[1] Weng T'ungho was posthumously restored to his full rank and titles by a Decree of the Regent. Thus was the Emperor tardily justified and the pale ghosts of his followers continued to suffer, even in Hades, the chances and changes of Chinese official life!

Weng T'ung-ho lived in his family home (Chang Shu in Kiangsu) until June, 1904, beloved and respected by all who knew him. He was by no means a nonentity like most of the aged officials near the Throne, but rather a person of considerable force of character, and after his dismissal lived always in the hope that he might yet return to serve the Emperor and the cause of reform upon the death of the Old Buddha. Meanwhile, he became a source of considerable trouble and anxiety to the District Magistrate of his native place, as he made it his practice to call on that official three times a month, and, in the guise of a suppliant, to address him, thus, on his knees: "You have orders from the Throne secretly to keep watch over my conduct, and I therefore now attend, as in duty bound, to assist you in carrying out these orders." As the Magistrate could never be certain that the once all-powerful Grand Secretary might not return to power, his own position was evidently one of considerable embarrassment, especially as the Weng family was the most important of the whole neighbourhood. In the intervals of baiting local officials, the Grand Secretary spent his time in scholarly retirement, and a volume of the letters written by him at this period has since been published; they show the man in a most attractive light, as a scholar and a poet; his light and easy style, combined with a tendency to mysticism and philosophic speculation, has always been highly appreciated by the *literati*. As his fortune had not been taken from him, his old age was probably happier in his native place than had it been exposed to the intrigues and hard work of official life at the Capital; and he died in the enjoyment of a reputation for patriotism and intelligence which extended far beyond his native province, and which, since his death, has greatly increased.

The Empress Dowager, realising that the loyalty of the *literati* had been greatly shaken by the Emperor's abolition of the old system of classical studies and public examinations, proceeded to reverse His Majesty's decision in a Decree which thoroughly delighted the Conservative Party. Scholars throughout the country praised it in unmeasured

terms, as a striking example of the Old Buddha's acute reasoning powers. To a certain extent it may be admitted that the new system of examinations introduced by the Emperor had led, at the outset, to abuses which were absent under the old classical system, where the anonymity of candidates was a cardinal principle. Her Majesty dealt with the question by ordering—

"that, for the future, the old system shall be restored, and that public examinations shall henceforward consist of themes and extracts from the Classics. A special examination for students of political economy, lately authorised, has been shown to be productive of evil, and is therefore abolished. It is the wish of the Throne that these public examinations shall be in reality a sound test of merit. Examiners and candidates alike should avoid meretricious adornments of style, and endeavour to conform strictly to the classical models."

Souvent femme varie, and the mind of Tzŭ Hsi never ran consistently for long in the same groove. Anxious always as to her popularity with all parties in the State, and with a view to adjusting that nice equilibrium of conflicting forces which constituted the pride of her statecraft and the strength of her rule, we find her next issuing a Decree which set forth the principles by which she professed to be guided. This Decree reflected a certain amount of anxiety and a doubt as to whether the punishment inflicted on the leading reformers might not be severely criticised by the outside world.

Her Majesty next turned her attention to the necessities and distressing condition of her people at large, and ordered that measures should once more be taken to prevent the constant destruction of life and property by the Yellow River in Shantung Province. She was under no delusion as to the nature of the measures taken in the past to remedy "China's Sorrow" which, from time immemorial has been the happy hunting-ground of peculating officialdom; nor could she expect that her stereotyped exhortations to virtue in this matter would afford her subjects any particular gratification. Her Majesty alluded to the fact that "frequent repairs to the banks of the Yellow River had not appeared to produce any permanent results," but the

remedy which she applied, viz., a consultation between the Grand Council and the various Ministries with the Censorate, was not very reassuring. Nor was her subsequent decision to send Li Hung-chang, to estimate on the spot the sum required for the construction of effective river conservancy works, calculated to convince the public of the sincerity of her benevolent intentions.

As in the days immediately following her first assumption of power after the overthrow of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy in 1861, the Empress Dowager at this period displayed remarkable activity in every direction, as is shown by the number of her Decrees at this period. After dealing with the Yellow River, she turned her attention to another permanent and crying evil, which for centuries has weighed heavily upon the lower classes of the Chinese people, viz., the interminable delay and heavy cost of legal proceedings and the hardships thus inflicted on all who may be compelled to seek justice at the hands of Chinese officials.

Her Majesty, in her Edict on the subject, showed a very close knowledge of the abuses with which, indeed, all Chinese are fully acquainted, but which official documents usually ignore. It is no doubt largely to her frankness in cases of this kind that the Old Buddha's widespread reputation for good nature and tender-heartedness may be ascribed. Throughout the country, but especially in the north, it has always been the opinion of the peasantry and of the merchant class, that the Old Buddha was, if anything, too tender-hearted, and that her extreme mildness of disposition, though no doubt laudable, was on many occasions a source of danger. To her untimely "benevolence" the populace in Peking in 1900 undoubtedly ascribed the fact that the foreigners and native Christians were not massacred *en masse* before the arrival of the relief expedition. In this Decree, on the subject of lawsuits, Her Majesty states that she has recently learned that legal proceedings are frequently hung up for several months at a time, and that innocent persons have been detained in custody for indefinite periods pending enquiry.

The Empress Dowager was much incensed at the sympathy for the Emperor shown by foreigners both in China

and abroad, a sympathy which was reflected for a time in the attitude of the British Minister and other members of the Diplomatic Body at Peking. Adopting, however, that policy of "conciliation pending a fitting opportunity for hostilities," which (as will be seen in another place) she had learned from study of the classics, she invited the wives of the foreign Ministers and other Legation ladies to an audience in the Palace at the beginning of the winter, and treated them with such courtesy and consideration that she won their hearts in a day. That her friendliness was entirely assumed, we have learned from her own statements, and there is no doubt that, from this time forward, she came more and more under the influence of the chief reactionary Kang Yi, who, during the absence of Jung Lu on leave, was able to persuade her that the first essential towards improving the country's military resources was the organisation of bands of militia throughout the Empire. By missionaries who were close observers of events in Shantung and other headquarters of this patriotic movement, it was soon realised that this military activity was directed primarily against foreigners, and owed its origin in the first instance to the Empress Dowager's approval of Kang Yi's policy of violent reaction.

The Decrees issued at this period leave us in some doubt as to whether the Empress herself understood clearly the forces that were about to be let loose in these so-called military train-bands, and her subsequent vacillation in regard to the Boxers would seem to afford an indication, if not proof, that she acted impulsively and without full knowledge, under the influence of Kang Yi. But the question rapidly increased in importance, and gradually Her Majesty's Decrees made it clear that the potential power of the train-bands as a national force was gradually impressing itself upon her mind, where, as we know, the hope of revenge on foreigners was ever latent. One Edict contained the following passage:—

"Recent events have caused me the greatest grief and anxiety; by day and by night, in the seclusion of my Palace, my thoughts dwell on these matters, and my one object is to secure the tranquillity and prosperity of my subjects by the

organisation of adequate military forces. My purposes, set forth in numerous Decrees, regarding the organisation of a strong army, the improvement of communications, and the formation of train-bands and militia, aim all at strengthening the Empire and promoting the contentment of my people."

After reiterating the substance of former Decrees, Her Majesty proceeds pathetically to complain "that they have to a large extent been ignored, or merely transmitted by one provincial authority to another, descending from the Governor to the District Magistrate through the usual routine channels, and eventually pigeon-holed as so much waste paper." She admits frankly that this method of treating Imperial Decrees is quite usual, and that it has the sanction of tradition, but she insists that the time has come for a change, and therefore now directs that all her Decrees are in future to be printed on special Imperial yellow paper, and their contents made known throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.

After further earnest exhortations to patriotism, and to that keen sense of duty which alone can develop efficiency in the public service, she directed that the local officials should keep closer touch with the gentry and the elders of the people, and that officers in command of military forces are to explain clearly to the rank and file the objects which Her Majesty has in view in deciding upon military organisation.

Certain writers have pointed to the numerous and plain-spoken Decrees issued by Tzŭ Hsi at this period, as proof that her heart was really set upon effectively reforming the country's administration, but it is always difficult for foreigners, and even for Chinese outside the Palace, to form any concise idea as to the inner meaning of these lucubrations, and how much of them was, on any particular occasion, to be taken as something outside of the traditional and stereotyped utterances of the Throne. It is certain that she herself failed to exercise the personal influence and example that would have convinced the world of her sincerity, and that she did nothing to put her house of the Forbidden City in order or to do away with the manifest and notorious abuses at her Court.

The Old Buddha concluded this remarkable display of literary and political activity by returning once more to the grievance which rankled most deeply, viz., that the chief conspirator against her sacred authority and person had made good his escape. Professing to believe that the heinousness of K'ang Yu-wei's crimes was not fully realised by her people, she issued another Decree on the subject, in December, as follows:—

"T'an Chung-lin, Viceroy of Canton, has memorialised stating that he has brought to light, by searches at K'ang Yu-wei's birthplace, a large quantity of documents, chiefly correspondence between the members of K'ang's party, together with certain seals, made of stone; all of which he has forwarded for our personal inspection. These letters contain a mass of treasonable matter. In one place the suggestion is actually made that T'an Ssu-t'ung (one of the reformers executed) should be nominated as President of the Chinese Republic! The writers ignore the present Dynasty even in dating their correspondence, and use instead a chronology which begins with the birth of Confucius; one of them has actually had the unbounded audacity to describe the present Dynasty as 'perfectly useless.' Abominable wickedness of this kind shows that these men were something worse than ordinary rebels and parricides. Their correspondence implicates an enormous number of persons, but, as the Throne desires to show mercy and to refrain from any further enquiry into this matter, the whole correspondence has now been burnt by our orders.

"When first we stated in our Decrees the nature of the treasonable conspiracy that K'ang Yu-wei had organised and of his revolutionary programme, it was our object to nip rebellion in the bud. But it would appear, from information which has reached us, that certain misinformed people still hold to the opinion and express it, that K'ang Yu-wei was nothing worse than an over-zealous reformer. We mention therefore this matter of the correspondence of these traitors, as proving beyond possibility of doubt that K'ang Yu-wei was indeed a base and unnatural malefactor, and we feel convinced that our loyal subjects, from the highest to the lowest, realising this truth, will now relegate his revolutionary utterances to their proper position of insignificance. Thus shall right principles triumph and the wrong be wiped out."

Thus was Tzŭ Hsi established in her pride of place and thus were sown the seeds of that great upheaval which was soon to shake the Empire to its foundations.

XIV

THE DIARY OF HIS EXCELLENCY CHING SHAN

[NOTE.—Ching Shan, a Manchu of the Plain Yellow Banner Corps, was born in 1823. In 1863 he became a Metropolitan Graduate and Han-lin Compiler, especially distinguished as a scholar in Sung philosophy. In the following year he was appointed a Junior Secretary of the Imperial Household (Nei wu fu), rising to Senior Secretary in 1869 and Controller in 1879. His father, Kuang Shun, had held the post of Comptroller-General under the Emperor Tao-Kuang, with whom he was for years on terms of intimacy; he was a kinsman of the Empress Dowager's family and in close touch with all the leading Manchu nobles. Ching Shan had therefore exceptional opportunities of knowing all the gossip of the Court, of learning the opinions and watching the movements of the high officials, Chinese and Manchu, who stood nearest to the Throne. After holding office in several of the Metropolitan Boards, he retired in 1894. He was tutor to Prince Tuan, Duke Tsai Lan, and other sons of Prince Tun (younger son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang), and therefore intimately associated with the leaders of the Boxer movement.

Seen even against the lurid background of the abomination of desolation which overtook Peking in 1900, Ching Shan's fate was unusually tragic. Above the storm and stress of battle and sudden death, of dangers from Boxers, wild Kansuh soldiery and barbarian invaders, the old scholar's domestic griefs, the quarrels of his women-folk, his son's unfilial behaviour, strike a more poignant note than any of his country's fast pressing misfortunes. And with good cause. On the 15th August, after the entry of the allied forces into Peking and the flight of the Empress Dowager, his wife, his senior concubine, and one of his daughters-in-law committed suicide. He survived them but a few hours, meeting death at the hands of his eldest son, En Ch'un, who pushed him down a well in his own courtyard. This son was subsequently shot by British troops for harbouring armed Boxers.

The Diary was found by the translator in the private study of Ching Shan's house on August 18th and saved, in the nick of time, from being burnt by a party of Sikhs. Many of the entries, which cover the period from January to August 1900, refer to trivial and uninteresting matters. The following passages are selected chiefly because of the light they throw on the part played by the Empress Dowager in that tragedy of midsummer madness—on the strong hand and statecraft of the woman, and on the unfathomable ignorance which characterises to-day the degenerate descendants of Nurhachi. It should be explained that Ching Shan (景善), who retired from office in 1894, must be distinguished from Ching Hsin (敬信), who died about 1904. The latter was also a Manchu and a favourite of Tzŭ Hsi, well known to foreigners at the capital. He held various high posts, rose to be a Grand Secretary, and remained in Peking after the flight of the Court, in charge of the palace. It was he who

escorted the Diplomatic Body through the deserted halls of the Forbidden City in September 1900. He was highly respected by all who knew him.

Ching Shan, though of similarly high rank, was personally quite unknown to foreigners, but a short note on his career (and another on that of Ching Hsin) will be found in the "List of the Higher Metropolitan and Provincial Officials" periodically compiled by the Chinese Secretariat of the British Legation; Edition of 1902, Kelly and Walsh, Shanghai.]

25th Year of Kuang Hsü, 12th Moon, 25th Day (25th January, 1900).—Duke Tsai Lan came to see me, his old tutor, to-day. He has much to tell me concerning the "Patriotic Harmony" train-bands (I Ho T'uan) which have been raised in Shantung by Yü Hsien, the Governor. Later, he described yesterday's audience at the palace; in addition to the Grand Secretaries, the Presidents of Boards and the Ministers of the Household, the "Sacred Mother" received Prince Kung, his uncles Tsai Ying and Tsai Lien and Prince Tuan. The Old Buddha announced her intention of selecting a new Emperor. She said: "The nation has shown resentment and reproached me for putting Kuang Hsü on the Throne, he being of the wrong generation; furthermore, he himself has shown great lack of filial duty to me notwithstanding the debt of gratitude he owed me for my kindness in thus elevating him. Has he not plotted against me with traitors from the south? I now propose therefore to depose him and to place a new Emperor on the Throne, whose accession shall take place on the first day of the New Year. It should be for you Ministers now to consider what title should be given to Kuang Hsü upon his abdication. There is a precedent for his removal from the Throne in the case of the Emperor Ching T'ai of the Ming Dynasty who was reduced to the rank of Prince and whose brother was restored to the Throne after twelve months of captivity among the Mongols." There was dead silence for some time in the Hall of Audience. At last the Grand Secretary Hsü T'ung suggested as appropriate the title of "Hun-te-Kung," which means, "The Duke of Confused Virtue"—or well-meaning bungler:—it had been given by the Mongol Dynasty to a deposed Sung Emperor. The Old Buddha approved. She then declared to the assembly that her choice of the new

Emperor was already made; it had fallen upon the eldest son of Prince Tuan, whose great devotion to Her Majesty's person was well known. Henceforward Prince Tuan should be in constant attendance at the Palace to supervise the education of his son. At this point the Grand Secretary Sun Chia-nai craved permission to speak. He implored the Empress not to depose the Emperor; of a certainty there would be rebellion in the Southern provinces. The choice of a new Sovereign rested with her, but it could only be done after "ten thousand years had elapsed" (*i. e.* after the death of the present Emperor). The "Motherly Countenance" showed great wrath; turning on Sun Chia-nai, she bade him remember that this was a family council to which she only admitted Chinese as an act of grace. She had already notified the Emperor of her intention, and he had no objections to offer. The Empress then ordered all present to repair to the Hall of Diligent Government there to await her and the Emperor, and upon their coming to witness the draft of the Decree appointing the Heir Apparent. The formal announcement of his accession to the throne would be postponed until the first day of the New Year.

They proceeded therefore to the entrance of the appointed Hall, and in a few minutes the Empress's chair appeared at the gateway, when all knelt and "ko-towed" three times. A number of eunuchs accompanied her, but she bade them remain without. She sent Major-domo Li Lien-ying to request the Emperor's presence; he came in his chair, alighting at the outer gate, and "ko-towed" to the Empress, who had taken her seat on the main throne within. She beckoned him to come to the Hall, and he knelt again, all officials still kneeling outside. *Chin lai, pu yung kuei hsia* ("Come in, you need not kneel"), called Her Majesty. She bade him sit down, and summoned next the Princes and Ministers—some thirty in all—to enter. Again the Old Buddha repeated her reasons for the step she was taking. The Emperor only said: "What Your Majesty suggests is quite proper and in accordance with my views." At this the Grand Secretary Jung Lu handed to the Empress the

Decree which the Grand Council had drafted.[1] She read it through and forthwith ordered its promulgation. Nothing was said to "The Lord of Ten Thousand Years" as to his being deposed; only the selection of the Heir Apparent was discussed. The Grand Council then remained for further audience, but the Princes were ordered to withdraw, so that Duke Lan does not know what passed thereafter. The Emperor seemed dazed, as one in a dream.

30th Day (30th January, 1900).—To-day Liu Shun shaved my head; he leaves to-night for his home at Pao-ti-hsien there to spend the new year. My eldest son, En Ch'un, is pressing me to give him fifty taels to buy an ermine cloak; he is a bad son and most undutiful. Chi Shou-ch'ing came to see me to-day, he has moved to "Kuai Pang" Lane. He tells me that his father-in-law, Yü Hsien, is to be made Governor of Shansi. The Old Buddha has received him in audience since his removal from the Governorship of Shantung on account of the murder of a French [2] missionary, and praised him for the honesty and justice of his administration. She does not approve of the Big Sword Society's proposed extermination of foreigners, because she does not believe they can do it; Yü Hsien goes often to Prince Tuan's palace, and they have many secret interviews. Prince Tuan declares that if he were made President of the Tsung-li Yamên he would make short work of all difficulties with foreigners. He is a violent man and lacking in refinement.

1st Day of 26th Year of Kuang Hsü (31st January, 1900).—To-day I am 78 years of age and my children mock me for being deaf. They are bad sons and will never rise so high as their father has done. When I was their age, between 20 and 30, the Emperor Tao-Kuang had already praised my scholarship and presented me with a complimentary scroll bearing a quotation from the writings of the philosopher Chu.

This year will witness many strange events; the people

[1] The Decree is given at the end of this chapter.

[2] The victim was British, not French—viz. the Rev. Mr. Brooks, killed on December 31, 1899, just after Yü Hsien's removal had been arranged.

all say so. The eighth month is intercalary which, in a year that has "Keng" for its cyclical character, has ever been an evil omen. The New Emperor was to have been proclaimed to-day under the title of "Heng-Ching"—"All-pervading Prosperity"—but my son En Lin tells me that the new year sacrifices were performed by the Ta Age (Heir Apparent) at the Palace of Imperial Longevity, acting only as Deputy for the Emperor Kuang Hsü. The Ta Age is a boy of fourteen; very intelligent, but violent-tempered. He walked on foot to the Palace Hall from the Coal Hill Gate.

5th Moon, 5th Day: The Dragon Festival (1st June, 1900).[1]—Arose at six o'clock and was washing my face in the small inner room, when Huo Kuei, the gatekeeper, came in with the card of Kang Yi, the Grand Secretary, and a present of ten pounds of pork, with seasonable greetings. I was not aware that he had already returned from his journey to Cho Chou, whither he had gone with Chao Shu-ch'iao to examine and report on the doings of the "patriotic train-bands" (*i. e.* Boxers). He sends word by the messenger that he will call upon me this morning.

My sons En Lin and En Ch'un are going to-day to a theatrical performance at Chi Shou-ch'eng's residence. My youngest son, En Ming, is on duty at the Summer Palace, where, for the next four days, the Old Buddha will be having theatricals. I am surprised that Kang Yi is not out there also. No doubt he only returned to Peking last night, and so does not resume his place on the Council till to-morrow morning.

The Hour of the Monkey (3 P.M.).—Kang Yi has been here and I persuaded him to stay for the mid-day meal. He is a worthy brother-in-law, and, though twenty years younger than I am, as wise and discreet a man as any on the Grand Council. He tells me that several hundred foreign devil troops entered the City yesterday evening. He and Chao Shu-ch'iao arrived at Peking at 4.30 P.M., and immediately set to composing their memorial to the

[1] Between January and June the entries are of no particular interest.

Empress Dowager about the heaven-sent Boxers, for presentation to-morrow morning. Prince Tuan has five days' leave of absence: Kang Yi went to see him yesterday evening. While they were discussing the situation, at the Prince's own house, there came a Captain of Prince Ch'ing's bodyguard with a message. Saluting Prince Tuan, he announced that about 300 foreign soldiers had left Tientsin in the afternoon as reinforcement for the Legation Guards. Prince Ch'ing implored Prince Tuan not to oppose their entry, on the ground that a few hundred foreigners, more or less, could make no difference. He trusted that Prince Tuan would give orders to his Corps (the "Celestial Tigers" Force) not to oppose the foreign devils. It was the wish of the Old Buddha that they should be permitted to guard the Legations. Prince Tuan asked for further details, and the Captain said that Prince Ch'ing had received a telegram from the Governor-General of Chihli (Yü Lu) to the effect that the detachment carried no guns. At this Prince Tuan laughed scornfully and said: "How can the few resist the many? What indeed will a hundred puny hobgoblins, more or less, matter?" Kang Yi, on the contrary, tells me that he strongly urged Prince Tuan to issue orders to Chung Li, the Commandant of the city, to oppose the entry of the foreign troops, but it appears that Jung Lu had already ordered their admission. Kang Yi is much incensed with Jung Lu about this, and cannot understand his motives. It seems that towards the close of last year Prince Tuan and Jung Lu had agreed to depose the Emperor and to put the Heir Apparent on the Throne, and Tuan confesses that, were it not for Jung Lu's great influence with the Old Buddha she would never have agreed to select his son as Heir Apparent. But now Jung Lu is for ever denouncing the Boxers and warning the Empress against encouraging and countenancing them. Prince Tuan and Kang Yi despair of ever being able to induce her to support the Boxers whole-heartedly so long as Jung Lu is against them. As an example of her present attitude, Prince Tuan told Kang Yi one day lately that his son, the Ta Age, had dressed himself up as a Boxer and

was going through their drill in the Summer Palace grounds with some eunuchs. The Old Buddha saw him and promptly gave orders that he be confined to his rooms. She also reprimanded the Grand Secretary, Hsü T'ung, for not keeping a better watch on his pupil and for permitting such unseemly behaviour, as she called it.

After leaving Prince Tuan's house, Kang Yi had gone out of the city by the Ch'ien Men and had seen the foreign troops pass in. The people muttered curses, he says, but no one molested them. What does it matter? None of them will ever leave the city. Kang Yi's journey to Cho Chou has convinced him that the whole province stands together as one man; even boys in their teens are drilling. Not a doubt of it; the foreigner will be wiped out this time! At Cho Chou the Departmental Magistrate, a man named Kung, had arrested several Boxer leaders, but Kang Yi and Chao Shu-ch'iao ordered them to be released and made them go through their mystic evolutions and drill. It was a wonderful sight, scarcely to be believed; several of them were shot, some more than once, yet rose uninjured from the ground. This exhibition took place in the main courtyard of the Magistrate's Yamên, in the presence of an enormous crowd, tight pressed, as compact as a wall. Chao Shu-ch'iao remembers having seen many years ago, in his native province of Shensi, a similar performance, and it is on record that similar marvels were seen at the close of the Han Dynasty, when Chang Chio headed the Yellow Turban insurrection against the Government and took many great cities with half a million of followers. They were said to be under the protection of the Jade Emperor[1] and quite impervious to sword-thrusts. Kang Yi and Chao Shu-ch'iao will memorialise the Empress to-morrow, giving the results of their journey and begging her to recognise the "patriotic train-bands" as a branch of the army. But they should be placed under the supreme command of Prince Tuan and Kang Yi, as Jung Lu, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern army, is so incredulous as to their efficacy against foreign troops.

[1] The Supreme Deity of the Taoists and tutelary spirit of the Boxers.

Although Major-domo Li Lien-ying is a warm supporter of the Boxers, and never wearies of describing their feats to the Old Buddha, feats which he himself has witnessed, it is by no means certain that the "kindly Mother" will heed him so long as Jung Lu is opposed to any official encouragement of the movement. And, besides, the nature of the Empress is peace-loving; she has seen many springs and autumns. I myself know well her refined and gentle tastes, her love of painting, poetry, and the theatre. When in a good mood she is the most amiable and tractable of women, but at times her rage is awful to witness. My father was Comptroller-General of the Imperial Household, and it was his lot on one occasion to experience her anger. This was in the sixth year of T'ung Chih (1868), when she learned that the chief eunuch, "Hsiao An'rh,"[1] had been decapitated in Shantung by the orders of the Co-Regent, the late "Empress Dowager of the East." She accused the Comptrollers of the Household of being leagued together in treachery against her; as they had not told her of what was going on she declared that Prince Kung was plotting against her life, and that all her attendants were associated in his treason. It was years before she forgave him. All An's fellow-eunuchs were examined under torture by the Department responsible for the management and discipline of the Household. When the chief eunuch's betrayer was discovered by this means, he was flogged to death by her orders in the Palace. But nowadays the Old Buddha's heart has softened, even towards foreigners, and she will not allow any of them to be done away with. One word from her would be sufficient to bring about their immediate and complete destruction, so that neither dog nor fowl be left alive, and no trace be left of all their foreign buildings. Kang Yi stayed with me about two hours and left to go and see Prince Tuan, who was expecting Major-domo Li Lien-ying to come into the city this afternoon.

K'un Hsiu, Vice-President of the Board of Works, called to see me. He tells me that Prince Ch'ing habitually

[1] A nickname of An Te-hai, *vide supra*, pp. 55 *et seq.*

ridicules the Boxers in private conversation, declaring them to be utterly useless, and unworthy of even a smile from a wise man. In public, however, he is most cautious: last week when the Old Buddha asked his opinion of them he replied by vaguely referring to the possible value of train-bands for protection of the Empire.

9 P.M.—My son En Ch'un has returned from Chi Shou-ch'eng's theatricals; everyone was talking, he says, of Jung Lu's folly in allowing the foreign troops to enter the city yesterday. Chi's father-in-law, Yü Hsien, has written to him from Shansi saying that for the present there are but few Boxers enrolled in that province, but he is doing his best to further the movement, so that Shansi may unite with the other provinces of the north "to destroy those who have aroused the Emperor's wrath." By common report, Yüan Shih-k'ai has now become a convert to Christianity: if he too were to suppress the movement in Shantung, not death itself could expiate his guilt.

En Ch'un's wife is most undutiful; this evening she has had a quarrel with my senior concubine, and the two women almost came to blows. Women are indeed difficult to manage; as Confucius has said, "Keep them at a distance, they resent it; treat them familiarly, and they do not respect you." I am seventy-eight years of age and sore troubled by my family; their conduct is hard for an old man to bear.

12th Day of the 5th Moon (June 8th, 1900).—My son, En Ming, came in this morning about midday; as Officer of the Bodyguard he had been in attendance on the Empress coming in from the Summer Palace. Jung Lu had been there yesterday morning and had had a long audience with Her Majesty. He gave her details of the burning of the railway by the Boxers. She was seriously alarmed and decided to return at once to the Winter Palace on the Southern Lake. It seems she cannot make up her mind as to the Boxers' invulnerability. Jung Lu has again applied for leave. When he is absent from the Grand Council, Kang Yi and Ch'i Hsiu have the greatest influence with her. En Ming says that on the way to the

city she kept urging the chair-bearers to hurry, and seemed out of sorts—nervously fanning herself all the time. At the Ying Hsiu gate of the Winter Palace the Emperor and the Heir Apparent were kneeling to receive her. No sooner had she reached the palace than she summoned Prince Tuan to audience, which lasted a long time. It is a pity that the Old Buddha will not decide and act more promptly. The Emperor never speaks at audience nowadays, although Her Majesty often asks him for his opinion. Tung Fu-hsiang accompanied the Court into Peking; he denounced Jung Lu at audience to-day, telling the Empress that if only the Legations were attacked, he would undertake to demolish them in five days; but that Jung Lu, by failing to support the Boxers, was a traitor to the Dynasty. The Empire, said he, would be endangered unless the present opportunity were seized to wipe off old scores against the foreigner. Tung is a coarse, foul-spoken fellow, most violent in his manner towards us Manchus. Kang Yi hates him, but for the present is only too willing to make use of him.

14th Day of the 5th Moon (June 10th).—Grand Councillor Ch'i Hsiu called to-day—he showed me the draft of a Decree breaking off all relations with foreigners, which he had prepared for the Empress's signature; so far, however, she has given no indication of agreeing to make war against them. In the afternoon I went to Duke Lan's residence—to-day being his wife's birthday. There are more than a hundred Boxers living in his outer courtyard, most of them country-folk, under the command of a Banner Captain named Wen Shun. Among them are five or six lads of thirteen or fourteen who will fall into a trance, foam at the mouth, then rise up and grasp wildly at anything that comes within their reach, uttering the while strange uncouth noises. Duke Lan believes that by their magic arts they will be able to guide him, when the time comes, to the houses of Christian converts (*lit.* Secondary Devils). He says that his wife goes often to the Palace and that she has told the Old Buddha of these things. The "Ta Kung Chu" (Princess Imperial and

adopted daughter of the Empress Dowager) has over two hundred and fifty Boxers quartered at the palace outside the Hou Men, but she has not dared to tell the Empress Dowager. Her brother, Tsai Ying, is also learning this drill. Truly it is a splendid society! The Kansuh braves are now entering the Chinese city, and thousands of people are preparing to leave Peking.

16*th Day of the* 5*th Moon* (June 12th).—Jung Lu attended the Grand Council this morning. Prince Li, the Senior Councillor, did not dare to tell the Empress that a foreign devil [1] had been killed yesterday by the Kansuh braves just outside the Yung-Ting Gate. Jung Lu was called to the audience chamber after Prince Li had retired, and Kang Yi believes that he urged her to order Tung Fu-hsiang to leave the city with his troops and at the same time to issue an Edict, bestowing posthumous honours on the murdered foreigner. None of the other Grand Councillors were summoned to audience; when Jung Lu left the presence, he returned straightway to his own house and spake no word to any of his colleagues. It is rumoured that more foreign troops are coming to Peking, and that the Empress Dowager will not permit them to enter the city. In this Jung Lu agrees with her. He has advised that all foreigners shall be allowed to leave Peking, but that it is contrary to the law of nations to attack the accredited representatives of foreign Powers.

18*th Day of the* 5*th Moon* (June 14th).—Yesterday, just before nightfall, En Ch'un came in to tell me that several hundred Boxers had entered the Ha-Ta Gate. I was sorry that my lameness prevented me from going out to see them, but I sent Hao Ching-ting to report. Well, indeed, is it that I have lived to see this day; almost every foreign building except the Legations had been burnt to the ground. Throughout the night flames burst forth in every quarter of the city; a grand sight! Kang Yi has sent me a message to say that he and Duke Lan went to the Shun Chih (S.W.) Gate at about the third watch to encourage

[1] The Chancellor of the Japanese Legation, Mr. Sugiyama.

and direct the Boxers who were burning the French Church. Hundreds of converts were burnt to death, men, women and children, and so great was the stench of burning flesh that Duke Lan and Kang Yi were compelled to hold their noses. At dawn Kang Yi went to the Palace to attend the Grand Council. Major-domo Li Lien-ying told him that the Old Buddha had watched the conflagrations from the hillock to the west of the Southern Lake, and had plainly seen the destruction of the French Church at the Shun-Chih Men. Li Lien-ying had told her that the foreigners had first fired on the crowd inside the Ha-Ta Gate, and that this had enraged the patriotic braves who had retaliated by slaughtering the converts. It seems that Hsü T'ung is unable to get out of his house because the foreign devils have barricaded the street; the Old Buddha is anxious about him and has commanded Prince Ch'ing to ask the foreign Legations to let him pass out. She is amazed at the Boxers' courage, and Kang Yi believes that she is about to give her consent to a general attack upon the Legations. Nevertheless, Li Lien-ying has warned him that exaggerated praise of the Boxers arouses her suspicions, and that, with the exception of Jung Lu, all the Grand Councillors are afraid to advise her. Her Majesty is moving into the Palace of Peaceful Longevity in the Forbidden City, as all these alarms and excursions disturb her sleep at the Lake Palace.

21st Day of the 5th Moon (June 17th).—A great fire has been raging all to-day in the southern city. Those reckless Boxers set fire to a foreign medicine store in the Ta Shalan'rh, and from this the flames spread rapidly, destroying the shops of the wealthy goldsmiths and assayers. Rightly says the Canon of History: "When fire rages on the Kun Lun ridge, common pebble and precious jade will be consumed together." The Boxers themselves are worthy men, but there are among them many evil-doers whose only desire is plunder; these men, wearing the Boxer uniform, bring discredit upon the real "patriotic braves." The outer tower of the Ch'ien Men having caught fire, the Empress ordered Jung Lu to send Banner troops on to the

wall so as to prevent any ruffians entering the Tartar City by the Ta Ch'ing Gate.

In the afternoon my married niece came over to see her aunt: she has been greatly alarmed by the uproar and fighting near her home, so they are moving to her father-in-law's house in the northern city.

I hear that Prince Tuan has now persuaded the Old Buddha to appoint him President of the Tsung-li Yamên; also that she has authorised him to require all foreigners to leave Peking, but they are to be protected against any attacks by the Boxers. My old friend, Ch'i Hsiu, has been made a Minister of the Tsung-li Yamên, also Na T'ung, the Sub-Chancellor of the Grand Secretariat. The latter memorialised lately advising the Throne to declare war before the foreign Powers could send reinforcements; the Old Buddha has placed him in the Tsung-li Yamên to assist Prince Tuan and Ch'i Hsiu in arranging for the foreigners' departure from the city. Prince Ch'ing still says nothing for or against the Boxers. Jung Lu has offered to escort the foreign Ministers half-way to Tientsin, but he stipulates that the Viceroyalty of Chihli must be taken from Yü Lu. My wife was taken seriously ill this evening; she kept on muttering incoherently and rolling about on the k'ang as if in great pain. We sent for Dr. Yung, who applied acupuncture.

24th Day of the 5th Moon (June 20th).—Yesterday, at midday, Yü Lu's memorial reached the Throne. He says that the foreign devils have actually demanded the surrender of the Taku forts, and he begs the Empress Dowager to declare war on them forthwith, to make them atone for their insolence and treachery. A special meeting of the Grand Council was immediately called. The Old Buddha was very wroth, but said she would postpone her decision until to-day, when all the Princes, Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Boards and Ministries, and the Lieutenant-Generals of Banners, would meet in special audience. Prince Tuan, Ch'i Hsiu and Na T'ung showed her a despatch from the foreign Ministers couched in most insolent language demanding her immediate abdication, the

degradation of the Heir Apparent, and the restoration of the Emperor.[1] The Ministers also asked that the Emperor should allow 10,000 foreign troops to enter Peking to restore order. Kang Yi came to tell me that never had he seen the Old Buddha so angry, not even when she learned of K'ang Yuwei's treason. "How dare they question my authority?" she exclaimed. "If I can bear this, what must not be borne? The insults of these foreigners pass all bounds. Let us exterminate them before we eat our morning meal."[2]

The wrath of the Old Buddha is indeed beyond control; neither Jung Lu nor any other can stop her now. She has told Jung Lu that if he wishes, he may still offer to escort the foreign Ministers to Tientsin, but she will give no guarantee for their safety on the journey because of their monstrous suggestion that she should abdicate. She does not absolutely desire their death, but says that the consideration she showed them in allowing the Legation guards to enter the city, and her solicitude in restraining the Boxers, have been ill-requited. "It were better," says she, "to go down in one desperate encounter than to surrender our just rights at the bidding of the foreigner."

Though only a woman, Her Majesty Tzŭ Hsi has all the courage of a man, and more than the ordinary man's intelligence.

24th Day of 5th Moon: The Hour of the Cock, 5–7 P.M. (20th June).—I have just returned from visiting my brother-in-law, the Grand Secretary Kang Yi; he told me all about this morning's audience. At the hour of the Tiger (3–5 A.M.) the Grand Council assembled in the Palace by the Lake, and were received by the Old Buddha in the Pavilion of the Ceremonial Phœnix. All were there, Prince Li, Jung Lu, Kang Yi, Wang Wen-shao, Ch'i Hsiu, and Chao Shu-ch'iao, but the Emperor was absent. This was a special audience, preparatory to the general audience of all the Princes and Ministers, and its object was to give the Grand Council an opportunity of laying

[1] This was a forgery.

[2] A quotation from the "Book of Odes."

before Her Majesty any new facts or opinions bearing upon the situation.

With tears in his eyes, Jung Lu knelt before Her Majesty; he confessed that the foreigners had only themselves to blame if China declared war upon them, but he urged her to bear in mind that an attack on the Legations, as recommended by Prince Tuan and the rest of the Council, might entail the ruin of the ancestral shrines of the Dynasty, as well as the altars of the local and tutelary Gods. What good purpose, he asked, would be served by the besieging, nay, even by the destruction, of this isolated handful of Europeans? What lustre could it add to the Imperial arms? Obviously, it must be waste of energy and misdirected purpose.

The Old Buddha replied that if these were his views, he had better persuade the foreigners to leave the city before the attack began; she could no longer restrain the patriotic movement, even if she wished. If therefore, he had no better advice than this to offer, he might consider himself excused from further attendance at the Council.

Jung Lu thereupon "ko-towed" thrice and left the audience hall to return to his own house. Upon his departure, Ch'i Hsiu drew from his boot the draft of the Decree which was to declare war. Her Majesty read it and exclaimed: "Admirable, admirable! These are exactly my views." She asked each Grand Councillor in turn for his opinion, and they declared unanimously in favour of hostilities. It was now the hour appointed for the general audience and Li Lien-ying came in to conduct Her Majesty to her own apartments to take tea before proceeding to the Hall of Diligent Government.

All the leading members of the Imperial Clan were kneeling at the entrance to the Hall, awaiting Their Majesties' arrival: the Princes Kung, Ch'un and Tuan; the "Beilehs" Tsai Lien and Tsai Ying; Duke Lan and his brother the "Beitzu" Ying; Prince Ch'ing and the five Grand Councillors; the Princes Chuang, Su and Yi; the Presidents, Chinese and Manchu, of the six Boards and the nine Ministries; the Lieutenants-General of the

twenty-four Banner divisions; and the Comptrollers of the Imperial Household. Their Majesties arrived together in chairs, borne by four bearers. The Emperor alighted first, and knelt as the "benign Mother" left her palanquin and entered the Hall, supported by the chief eunuch Li Lien-ying, and by his immediate subordinate, Ts'ui Chin. The Emperor was ghastly pale, and it was observed that he trembled as he took his seat on the Lower Throne by the Empress Dowager's side.

The Old Buddha first called on all present to draw near to the Throne; then, speaking with great vehemence, she declared that it was impossible for her to brook these latest indignities put upon her by the foreigners. Her Imperial dignity could not suffer it. Until yesterday, until, in fact, she had read the despatch addressed to the Tsung-li Yamên by the Diplomatic Body, it had been her intention to suppress the Boxers; but in the face of their insolent proposal that she should hand over the reins of government to the Emperor, who had already proved himself quite unfitted to rule, she had been brought to the conclusion that no peaceful solution of the situation was possible. The insolence of the French Consul at Tientsin Tu Shih-lan (Du Chaylard), in demanding the surrender of the Taku Forts was bad enough, but not so grievous an affront as the Ministers' preposterous proposal to interfere with her personal prerogatives as Sovereign. Her decision was now taken, her mind resolved; not even Jung Lu, to whom she had always looked for wise counsel, could turn her from this purpose. Then, addressing more directly the Chinese present, she bade them all to remember that the rule of her Manchu House had conferred many and great benefits upon the nation for the past two hundred and fifty years, and that the Throne had always held the balance fairly in the benevolent consideration for all its subjects, north and south alike. The Dynasty had scrupulously followed the teachings of the Sages in administering the government; taxation had been lighter than under any previous rulers. Had not the people been relieved, in time of their distress, by grants from the Privy Purse? In her own reign, had

not rebellions been suppressed in such a manner as to earn the lasting gratitude of the southern provinces? It was therefore now their duty to rally to the support of the Throne, and to assist it in putting an end, once and for all, to foreign aggression. It had lasted too long. If only the nation were of one mind, it could not be difficult to convince these barbarians that they had mistaken the leniency of the past for weakness. That leniency had been great; in accordance with the principle which prescribes the showing of kindness to strangers from afar, the Imperial House had ever shown them the greatest consideration. The Emperor K'ang Hsi had even allowed them liberty to propagate their religion, an act of mistaken benevolence which had been an increasing cause of regret to his successors. In matters of vital principle, she said, these foreigners ignore the sacred doctrines of the Sages; in matters of detail, they insult the customs and cherished beliefs of the Chinese people. They have trusted in the strength of their arms, but to-day China can rely upon millions of her brave and patriotic volunteers. Are not even striplings taking up arms for the defence of their country? She had always been of the opinion that the allied armies had been permitted to escape too easily in the tenth year of Hsien Feng (1860), and that only a united effort was then necessary to have given China the victory. To-day, at last, the opportunity for revenge had come.

Turning to the Emperor, she asked for his opinion. His Majesty, after a long pause, and with evident hesitation, urged her to follow Jung Lu's advice, to refrain from attacking the Legations, and to have the foreign Ministers escorted in safety to the coast. But, he added, it must be for her to decide. He could not dare to assume any responsibility in the matter.

The junior Chinese Member of the Council, Chao Shu-ch'iao, then spoke. He begged the Old Buddha to issue her orders for the immediate extermination of every foreigner in the interior, so as to avoid the danger of spies reporting on the nature and extent of the patriotic movement. Her Majesty commanded the Grand Council to

consider this suggestion and to memorialise in due course for an Edict.

After him, however, each in his turn, the Manchu Li-shan, and the Chinese Hsü Ching-ch'eng and Yüan Ch'ang implored the Empress not to declare war against the whole world. China, they said, could not possibly escape defeat, and, even if the Empire should not be partitioned, there must arise great danger of rebellion and anarchy from within. Yüan Ch'ang even went so far as to say that he had served as a Minister of the Tsung-li Yamên for two years and that he had found foreigners to be generally reasonable and just in their dealings. He did not believe in the authenticity of the despatch demanding the Empress's abdication, which Prince Tuan professed to have received from the Diplomatic Body; in his opinion, it was impossible that the Ministers should have dared to suggest any such interference with China's internal affairs.

At this Prince Tuan arose and angrily asked the Empress whether she proposed to listen to the words of a Chinese traitor? Her Majesty rebuked him for his loud and violent manner of speaking, but ordered Yüan Ch'ang to leave the Audience Hall. No one else dared to say anything.

She then ordered the promulgation of the Decree, for immediate communication to all parts of the Empire; at the same time announcing her intention of sacrificing at the ancestral shrines before the commencement of hostilities. Prince Chuang and Duke Lan were appointed joint Commanders-in-Chief of the Boxers, but Tzŭ Hsi gave them clearly to understand that if the foreign Ministers would agree to take their departure from Peking this afternoon Jung Lu was to do his best to protect them as far as Tientsin. Finally, the Empress ordered the Grand Council to report themselves at mid-day for further orders. All were then permitted to retire with the exception of Prince Tuan and Duke Lan; these remained in special audience for some time longer. Hsü T'ung was present at the general audience, having made good his escape from the

Legation quarter, and was congratulated by Her Majesty on his safety.

They say that Duke Lan told the Empress of a vision in which, the night before, he had seen Yü Huang, the Jade Emperor. To him, and to his company of Boxers while drilling, the god had appeared, and had expressed his satisfaction with them and their patriotic movement. The Old Buddha observed that the Jade Emperor had appeared in the same manner at the beginning of the reign of the Empress Wu of the T'ang Dynasty (the most famous woman ruler in Chinese history); the omen, she thought, showed clearly that the gods are on the side of China and against the barbarians.

When, at the Hour of the Sheep (1 P.M.) Kang Yi returned to the Palace, he found Prince Ch'ing in the ante-room of the Grand Council, greatly excited. It seems that En Hai,[1] a Manchu sergeant, had just come to his residence and reported that he had shot and killed two foreigners whom he had met, riding in sedan chairs that morning, just opposite the Tsungpu Street. As orders had been issued by Prince Tuan and Ch'i Hsiu to the troops that all foreigners were to be shot wherever met, and as one of these two was the German Minister, he hoped that Prince Ch'ing would recommend him for special promotion. Prince Tuan had already heard the news and was greatly pleased. Prince Ch'ing and Kang Yi discussed the matter and decided to inform the Empress Dowager at once. Kang Yi did not think that the death of one foreign devil, more or less, could matter much, especially now that it had been decided to wipe out the Legations entirely, but Prince Ch'ing thought differently and reiterated his opinion that the killing of an accredited Envoy is a serious matter. Until now, only missionaries and their converts had been put to death, but the murder of a Minister could not fail to arouse fierce indignation, even as it did in the case of the British negotiator[2] who was captured by our troops in the 10th year of Hsien-Feng (1860).

[1] This man's subsequent arrest and execution are described in a ensorate memorial at the end of this chapter.

[2] Mr. (later Sir Harry) Parkes.

The Grand Council then entered the presence. Prince Li, as the senior member of the Council, told the Old Buddha the news, but added that the foreigners had brought it on themselves because they had first fired on the people. Upon hearing this Her Majesty ordered Jung Lu to be summoned in haste, but Kang Yi, being extremely busy with his work of providing supplies for the Boxers, did not await his arrival.

Now, even as I write, they tell me that bullets are whizzing and whistling overhead; but I am too deaf to hear them. En Ch'un says that already the Kansuh braves have begun the attack upon the Legations and that Jung Lu's endeavours to have the foreigners escorted to a place of safety have completely failed.

Liu Shun has just come in and asked for leave to go home for a week. People are leaving the city in all directions and in great numbers.

24th Day of the 5th Moon: the Hour of the Dog, 7–9 P.M. (June 20th, 1900).—En Ming has just come in to inform me that a foreign devil [1] has been captured by Tung Fu-hsiang's troops. They were taking him, wounded, to Prince Chuang's Palace, prodding at him with their bayonets; and he was babbling in his foreign tongue. He will be decapitated, and his captors will receive good rewards (Prince Chuang has just been given command of the Gendarmerie). "The rut in which the cart was overturned is just ahead." Let this be a warning to those puny barbarian ruffians, the soldiery encamped at the very gates of the palace. (*This alludes to the proximity of the Legations to the palace enclosure.*) Jung Lu was all ready to escort the foreigners to Tientsin; he had with him over 2000 Manchu troops. Doubtless he means well, but the Old Buddha now says that she will not prevent the Kansuh braves from destroying the Legations. If the foreigners choose to leave with Jung Lu, let them do so, and they will not be attacked; but if they insist upon remaining, then their punishment be upon their own heads, and "let them not say they were not forewarned."

[1] Professor James.

Duke Lan sent over to invite me to breakfast with him to-morrow; he is sore pressed with business cares just now; nevertheless, he and his brothers always treat their old teacher with politeness and respect. Though bellicose by nature, he is singularly gentle and refined. Chi Pin [1] sent over to ask whether we would like to move to his house in the north of the city, because the noise of the firing is very great in our quarter, but I am so deaf that I hear not a sound of it all.[2]

Chi Pin is writing to his father-in-law, Yü Hsien, about the audience in the palace.

Duke Lan writes to tell me that this evening Na T'ung informed Prince Tuan and Ch'i Hsiu that, by the orders of that rascally Chinaman, Yüan Ch'ang, the corpse of the foreign devil had been coffined. Na T'ung wanted Prince Tuan to have the corpse decapitated and the head exhibited over the Tung An Gate. Yüan Ch'ang defends his action, saying that he knew the German Minister personally at the Tsung-li Yamên, and he cannot bear the idea of leaving his body uncoffined. Mencius says: "It is common to all men to feel pity. No one can see a child fall into a well without a shudder of commiseration and horror." But these Chinese traitors of ours are compassionate to the enemies of our glorious Kingdom, and the foes of our ancient race. It is passing strange!

25th Day of the 5th Moon: the Hour of the Monkey, 3–5 P.M. (June 21st).—My chair-bearers have fled from the city, so to-day I had to use my cart to go to Duke Lan's residence. Prince Tuan and the Grand Secretary, Kang Yi, were there; also Chung Li, lately Commandant of the Gendarmerie, and the "Beileh" Tsai Lien. Prince Tuan had seen the Old Buddha this morning; their Majesties have moved from the palace by the lake into the Forbidden City. As the Empress Dowager was crossing the road which runs between the Gate of the Hsi Yüan (Western

[1] Mentioned above under full name of Chi Shou-ch'eng. Chi Pin was his "hao" or intimate personal name.

[2] Ching Shan's house was just inside the Tung An Gate of the Imperial City, about a quarter of a mile to the north of the present Legation area boundary.

Park) and the Hsi Hua Gate of the Forbidden City she saw that a number of Boxers had lined up on each side of the street as a Guard of Honour for the "Sacred Chariot." She presented them with 2000 taels, congratulating their commander, Prince Chuang, on their stalwart appearance. Saith the Old Buddha to Prince Tuan: "The foreigners are like fish in the stew-pan. For forty years have I lain on brushwood and eaten bitterness because of them, nursing my revenge like Prince Kou Chien of the Yüeh State (5th century B.C.). Never have I treated the foreigners otherwise than generously; have I not invited their womenfolk to visit the Lake Palace? But now, if only the country will stand together, their defeat is certain."

I think Prince Tuan hopes that the Old Buddha will now have the Ta Age proclaimed Emperor; but unfortunately the Nanking Viceroy, Liu K'un-yi, has much influence over her in this matter. When he was in Peking this spring, in the second moon, he solemnly warned her against the Boxers and ventured even to remonstrate at the Ta Age being made Heir Apparent. Were it not for Liu K'un Yi, he would have been Emperor long since; therefore Prince Tuan has a very bitter hatred against him. Liu told the Old Buddha at his second audience that if H.M. Kuang Hsü were deposed, the people of his province would assuredly rise in rebellion. What concern is it of theirs who reigns in the Capital? His present Majesty's reign has brought many misfortunes to the nation; it is high time that it came to an end. Why does not Prince Tuan enter the palace and proclaim his son Emperor? Tung Fu-hsiang's Kansuh braves and the Prince's own Manchu soldiery would surely rally round him. But if Jung Lu opposed them the Old Buddha would side with him. His wife [1] is for ever in the palace.

26th Day of the 5th Moon (June 22nd).—I went this

[1] This favourite companion of Tzŭ Hsi was really Jung Lu's secondary consort, who was only raised to the rank of *la première légitime* after his first wife's death in September 1900. She survived him and continued to exercise great influence with the Old Buddha.

morning to Prince Li's palace in the western quarter of the city. I had to go in my small cart, because my chair-bearers have either run away to their homes in the country or had joined the Boxers. My two sons, En Ch'un and En Ming, have been making arrangements to quarter one hundred Boxers in our outer courtyard, and it seems that we shall have to supply them with food. Although it cannot be denied that everyone should join in this noble work of exterminating the barbarians, I grudge, nevertheless, spending money in these hard times even for the Boxers, for rice is now become as dear as pearls, and firewood more precious than cassia buds. It may be that, in my old age, I am becoming like that Hsiao Hung, brother to the founder of the Liang Dynasty, who was so miserly that he stored up his money in heaps. On every heap of a million cash he would place a yellow label, while a purple label marked each hoard of ten millions. It is recorded of him, that his relatives abused him for this habit; as for me, my sons would like to get at my money, but they cannot.

I find Prince Li much depressed in his mind; his treasure vaults contain vast wealth; as senior member of the Grand Council, moreover, he feels a weight of responsibility that is too much for him. His abilities are certainly small, and I have never yet understood why the Old Buddha appointed him to succeed Kung as senior Councillor. He tells me of a stormy meeting at the Grand Council this morning; it seems that Her Majesty is greatly annoyed with Liu K'un-yi for sending in a telegram strongly denouncing the Boxers. He has also telegraphed privately to Jung Lu, imploring him to check their rebellion, but no one knows what answer Jung Lu has made.

In his telegram to the Empress Dowager, which came forward by express couriers from Paotingfu, the Viceroy declares that he would be more than ready to march north with all his troops if it were to repel a foreign invasion, but he firmly declines to lend his forces for the purpose of massacring a few helpless foreigners. Commenting on this, the Empress Dowager quoted the words of the Classic Historical Commentary (Tso Chuan): "The upper and

lower jaws mutually assist each other; if the lips shrivel, then must the teeth catch cold." Thereby she meant to imply that even such, in its close interdependence, is the relation between the northern and southern parts of our Empire, and no one should know this better than Liu K'un-yi, after his experiences at the time of the Taiping Rebellion.

The Old Buddha has directed Prince Chuang, as head of the city Gendarmerie, to issue a proclamation offering Tls. 50 for every head of a male barbarian brought in, Tls. 40 for that of a woman, and Tls. 30 for that of a child.

While I was still talking with Prince Li, Jung Lu came over in his sedan chair to visit his kinsman. He looks very tired, and walks with a limp. He was loud in denouncing the Boxers, who, he says, are quite incapable of doing any good. They had even now dared to shout abuse at him while passing the "Houmen," calling him a Chinese traitor. I could not help thinking that Jung Lu deserved the name, but I did not say so. He is a strong man, the strongest of all the Manchus, and I greatly fear that his influence may yet be able to wreck all our hopes.

Returning to my house, I heard that the Princes Tuan and Chuang were sending troops to surround the French Cathedral, which is defended by a few foreign soldiers only, and which should, therefore, be easily captured. Prince Li's palace is within a stone's-throw of the cathedral, and to enter the Forbidden City he has to pass just south of it, through the "Hsi-Hua" gate. Although greatly disturbed by the impending hostilities in his neighbourhood, he fears to move to a quieter locality, lest, in his absence, his treasure vaults should be plundered. No doubt the cathedral will fall in a few days.

My courtyard is now full of Boxers and Kansuh soldiery; I can no longer call my house my own. How I loathe these cursed foreigners for causing all this disturbance!

The same Day: at the Hour of the Dog (7–9 P.M.).—I learn that Jung Lu has just sent off a courier with a telegram, which Yüan Shih-k'ai is to send on to the Viceroys

of Canton, Nanking and Wuch'ang. Prince Li has sent me a copy, which I am to keep secret; it reads as follows :—

"With all respect I have received your telegrams. Where one weak people dares to oppose ten or more powerful nations, the inevitable result can only be complete ruin. It has always been maintained as a fixed principle with civilised nations, that, in the event of war between any two Powers, their respective Envoys should be treated with respect. Can it now be that this our great inheritance, founded by our remote ancestors at so great a cost of toil and danger, is to be endangered, and suddenly brought to ruin, by these false workers of magic? Shall the fate of the Dynasty be staked on a single throw? It requires no peculiar sagacity to see that these Boxers' hopes of success are nothing but the shadow of a dream. It is true and undeniable, that, from Their Majesties on the Throne down to the very lowest of our people, all have suffered from the constant aggression of foreigners and their unceasing insults. For this reason these patriotic train-bands have been organised, claiming a divine mission of retaliation; but the present crisis is all-serious, and although I have used every effort to explain its dangers, I have laboured in vain. I am sick and suffering from lameness, but since I obtained leave of absence I have already submitted seven separate memorials denouncing these Boxers. Seeing that they produced no result, I have now left my sick bed, in order, if possible, to explain the situation clearly to Their Majesties; and this also has been in vain.

"All the Princes and Ministers of State who surround the Throne now cry out against me with one voice, as your Excellencies can readily believe. I dare not quote in this place the words of Her Majesty, but I may say that the whole of the Imperial family have joined the Boxers, and at least two-thirds of our troops, both Manchu and Chinese, are with them. They swarm in the streets of our capital like a plague of locusts, and it will be extremely difficult to disperse them.

"Even the divine wisdom of Her Majesty is not sufficient to stand against the will of the majority. If Heaven is not on our side, how can I oppose its will? For several days past I have been pondering night and day on some way out of our difficulties, some forlorn hope of escape. Therefore yesterday morning (June 20th) I arranged for a meeting with the foreign Ministers at the Tsung-li Yamên, with a view to providing a safe-conduct for the entire foreign community, with my own troops, to Tientsin. This course appeared to me to hold out same reasonable chances of success, but Prince Tuan's soldiery slew the German Minister, and since then the situation continues to develop from hour to hour with such extraordinary rapidity that words fail me to describe it. On my side, in the dis-

cussions of the Grand Council and the Chamberlains of the Presence, are Prince Ch'ing and Wang Wen-shao, but the former, following his usual practice, has applied for leave, and Her Majesty will have nothing to do with him; so that these two are of no real assistance to me. I have no fear of death, but I grieve at the thought of the guilt which will be recorded against me in history; Heaven knows that I am overwhelmed with grief and shame. I have received great favours at the hands of the Throne, and can only now pray to the spirits of the Dynastic ancestors to protect our Empire. The situation here is well-nigh lost, but it remains for your Excellencies to take all possible steps for the protection of your respective provinces. Let each do his utmost, and let proper secrecy be maintained." Signed "Jung Lu, with tears in his eyes."

It is reported from the Grand Council that Chang Chih-tung has telegraphed to Her Majesty, assuring her of his devotion and loyalty, and asking whether he should come north with his troops to help in the work of destroying the barbarians. Chang is a time-server, and loves not the Emperor; we have not forgotten how he approved the Decree appointing an Heir Apparent, and how he would have been a party to His Majesty's removal from the Throne, justifying himself on quibbling grounds of legality and precedents as to the lawful succession. He trims his sails according to the wind of the moment, and has no courage of fixed principles, like Liu K'un-yi. I despise the latter's views in opposing the Boxers, but no one can help admiring his upright character.

(*At this point the diarist proceeds to give a full account of the rise and spread of the Boxer movement, describing in detail their magic rites, their incantations, and their ceremonies of initiation. The facts have nearly all been published before, so that most of this portion of the Diary is here omitted. It is chiefly interesting as showing to what heights of superstition even the most educated of the Manchus, including the Empress Dowager, could go. We give one example only of the farrago of gibberish which, believed in high quarters, nearly brought about the end of the Dynasty.*)

The Boxers also possess a secret Talisman, consisting of a small piece of yellow paper, which they carry on their persons when going into battle. On it is drawn, in vermillion paint, a figure which is neither that of man nor devil, demon nor saint. It has a head, but no feet; its face is sharp-pointed, with eyes and eyebrows, and four halos. From the monster's heart to its lower extremities runs a mystic inscription, which reads: "I am Buddha of the cold cloud; before me lies the black deity of fire; behind is Laotzu himself." On the creature's body are also borne the characters for Buddha, Tiger, and Dragon. On the top left-hand corner are the words "invoke first the Guardian of Heaven," and on the right-hand corner, "invoke next the black gods of pestilence." The Empress Dowager has learned this incantation by heart, and repeats it seventy times daily, and every time that she repeats it the chief eunuch (Li Lien-ying) shouts: "There goes one more foreign devil." The Boxers determine the fate of their victims by a curious test, which consists of burning a ball of paper, and seeing whether the ashes ascend or remain upon the ground. They may believe that it is the spirits who decide, but, as a matter of fact, these balls of paper are sometimes made of thinner material, which naturally leave a lighter ash that is easily caught up in the air; whereas, when they use thick paper, the ashes seldom rise. Some of the balls are also more tightly rolled than others, and it is quite evident that the ashes of the loose ones have a much better chance of blowing away than those which are tightly rolled. Similarly, when they set fire to any place, they profess to be guided by their gods, and they say that fire leaps forth at the point of their swords in any quarter which the spirits desire to have destroyed. As a matter of fact, however, there is deception practised in this also, for when they wish to burn any place for purposes of plunder they have it sprinkled in advance with kerosene oil, and if no oil is available, they even pile up brushwood around it, upon which they drop a lighted match secreted upon their persons.

27*th Day of the* 5*th Moon* (June 23rd).—The foreign

barbarian of whom I have written[1] was executed this morning at the hour of the Hare (6 A.M.) and his head is now exhibited in a cage, hanging from the main beam of the "Tung-An" gate. It had to be put in a cage, as there was no queue to hang it by. The face has a most horrible expression, but it is a fine thing, all the same, to see a foreigner's head hung up at our palace gates. It brings back to memory the heads that I saw outside the Board of Punishments in the tenth year of Hsien-Feng (1860), but there were black devils among those. Jung Lu tried to save the barbarian's life, and even intended to rescue him by force, but the Princes Tuan and Chuang had determined upon his death, and they had him executed before Jung Lu knew it, so that, when his men arrived upon the scene, the foreigner's head had already parted company from his body. The Princes had him kneeling before them yesterday for several hours on a chain, and all the time he kept on imploring them to spare his life; his groans were most painful to hear. The Old Buddha has been informed of his death, and she gave orders that Tls. 500 be distributed to the soldiers who had captured him, *i. e.* a reward ten times greater than that which was promised in the proclamations.

The Boxers who occupy my courtyard tried to take away my cigars from me, but subsequently relented and allowed me to keep them because of my extreme old age. Nothing of foreign origin, not even matches, may be used nowadays, and these Boxer chiefs, Chang Te-ch'eng and Han Yi-li, both of whom are common and uneducated men, are treated with the greatest respect even by Princes of the blood: a curious state of affairs indeed!

Duke Tsai Lan came to see me this afternoon. He tells me an extraordinary story how that the Heir Apparent called the Emperor a "devil's pupil" this morning, and, when rebuked for it, actually boxed His Majesty's ears. The Emperor then reported the facts in a memorial to Her Majesty, who flew into a towering rage, and gave orders to the eunuch Ts'ui to administer twenty sharp

[1] *Vide* under June 20th.

strokes of the whip on the Heir Apparent's person. Prince Tuan is much enraged at this, but he is horribly afraid of Her Majesty, and, when she speaks to him, "he is on tenter-hooks, as if thorns pricked him, and the sweat runs down his face."

Tung Fu-hsiang told the Empress Dowager yesterday that the Legations have come to the end of their tether. From a rockery on some high ground in the Forbidden City gardens, the Old Buddha could see the flames bursting from the Legation quarter, and was more than once assured that final destruction had come upon the foreigners at last. But later in the afternoon, Hsü Ching-ch'eng was received in audience, when he presented a memorial which he and Yüan Ch'ang had drawn up, denouncing the Boxers; he told Her Majesty that it was not the Legations, but the Han-lin Academy, that was in flames, the Kansuh soldiery having set fire to it in the hope that the conflagration might spread and thus enable them to force a way into the Legation. Her Majesty was greatly disappointed and displeased, severely blaming Tung Fu-hsiang, and she sent for Jung Lu and talked with him in private for a long while.

Good news has come in to-day of victorious fighting at Tientsin; Yü Lu reports that many foreigners were slain in their attack on the Taku forts, and several of their warships sunk. Practically the whole of the foreign community of Tientsin had been annihilated, he says.

Many hundreds of Chinese Christians were put to death to-day just outside Prince Chuang's palace. The judges who convicted them were Prince Chuang, Yi Ku, Fen Ch'e, and Kuei Ch'un. There was no mercy shown, and a large number of innocent people perished with the guilty. The Empress is essentially a kind-hearted woman, and she was greatly shocked to hear of this wholesale massacre. She was heard to say that if the Catholics would only recant and reform, a way of escape might very well be provided for them.

29th Day of the 5th Moon (June 25th).—To-day about sixty of the Boxers, led by the Princes Tuan and Chuang,

and the "Beilehs" Tsai Lien and Tsai Ying, marched to the palace at 6 o'clock in the morning to search there for converts. Coming to the gate of the Palace of Peaceful Longevity, where Their Majesties were still abed, they noisily clamoured for the Emperor to come out, denouncing him as a friend of foreigners. Prince Tuan was their spokesman. I heard of the incident from Wen Lien, Comptroller of the Household, who was on duty this morning; he was amazed at the foolhardy effrontery of Prince Tuan, and thought that he had probably been drinking. On hearing the noise outside and the shouts of the Boxers clamouring to kill all "devil's pupils," the Old Buddha, who was taking her early tea, came out swiftly and stood at the head of the steps, while the Princes and the Boxer leaders swarmed in the courtyard below her. She asked Prince Tuan whether he had come to look upon himself as the Emperor; if not, how dared he behave in this reckless and insolent manner? She would have him know that she, and she alone, had power to create or depose the Sovereign, and she would have him remember that the power which had made his son Heir Apparent could also wipe him out in a moment. If he and his fellow Princes thought that because the State was at a crisis of confusion they could follow their own inclinations in matters of this kind, they would find themselves very seriously mistaken. She bade them depart, and refrain from ever again entering the palace precincts, except when summoned to her presence on duty. But they would first prostrate themselves and ask His Majesty's pardon for their insolent behaviour. As a slight punishment for their offences, she further commanded that the Princes be mulcted of a year's allowances. As to the Boxer chiefs, who had dared to create this uproar in her hearing, they should be decapitated upon the spot, and Jung Lu's guards, who were on duty at the outer gates, were ordered to carry this sentence into immediate effect. Her Majesty is so greatly incensed against the Boxers at this moment that everyone thinks that Jung Lu will now be able to put a stop to the attacks on the Legations. The Emperor was much alarmed at this

incident, and when it was over humbly thanked Her Majesty for so benevolently protecting him.

Later; 9 P.M.—The Old Buddha has suddenly determined, in her rage against Prince Tuan and his followers, to put a stop to the fighting in Peking, and she now agrees that Jung Lu shall proceed to the Legations to discuss terms of peace. At 6 P.M. to-day all firing stopped, and Jung Lu, at the head of his troops, proceeded to the bridge which lies on the north of the Legation quarter. The foreigners came out from their hiding-places and commenced to parley; they were shown a board, and on it the words written: "Orders have now been received from the Empress Dowager to afford due protection to the Legations." Jung Lu hoped to be able to induce the foreign Ministers to confer with him for the purpose of restoring order. For three hours not a shot has been fired; but En Ming has just come in to tell me that the situation has again changed, and that the Old Buddha has heard such good accounts of the defeat of the foreign relief force on its way to Peking that she is once more determined to give the Boxers their head and "to eat the flesh and sleep on the skins" of the foreign devils.

4th Day of the 6th Moon: at the Hour of the Dog, 7 P.M. (June 30, 1900.)—Kang Yi called to-day, and remained with me for the evening meal. He tells me that Tung Fu-hsiang called in person this morning on Jung Lu at his residence, and asked him for the loan of the heavy artillery which is under his orders. Jung Lu is said to have ample armaments in stock in the city, the property of the Wu Wei-chün (Military Defence Corps) sufficient to knock every foreign building to pieces in a few hours.

Tung was kept waiting at Jung Lu's door for over an hour; when finally admitted, he began to bluster, whereupon Jung Lu feigned sleep. "He gave no consent, but leant on his seat and slumbered."[1] Tung then expostulated with Jung Lu for his rudeness, but the Commander-in-Chief only smiled, and brought the interview to an end by remarking that Tung's only way to get the guns would

[1] A quotation from Mencius.

be to persuade the Old Buddha to give him Jung Lu's head with them. "Apply for an audience at once," he said. "She believes you to be a brave man and will certainly comply with any request you may make."

Tung Fu-hsiang left in a towering rage, and made straight for the Forbidden City, although the hour for audiences was long since past. At the gate of the Hall of Imperial Supremacy (Huangchi tien) he made a loud disturbance, bidding the eunuchs inform Her Majesty that the Kansuh Commander-in-Chief was without, desiring audience. It so happened that the Old Buddha was engaged in painting a design of bamboos on silk, and she was highly displeased at being thus disturbed. Tung was ushered in, however, and fell on his knees. "Well," said Her Majesty, "I suppose that you have come to report the complete destruction of the Legations? This will be the tenth time since the end of last Moon." "I have come," replied Tung Fu-hsiang, "to ask Your Majesty's permission to impeach the Grand Secretary Jung Lu as a traitor and the friend of barbarians. He has the guns which my army needs; with their aid not a stone would be left standing in the whole of the Legation quarter. But he has sworn never to lend these guns, even though Your Majesty should command it." Angrily the Old Buddha replied: "Be silent. You were nothing but a brigand to begin with, and if I allowed you to enter my army it was only to give you an opportunity of atoning for your former misdeeds. Even now you are behaving like a brigand, forgetting the majesty of the Imperial Presence. Of a truth, your tail is becoming too heavy to wag. Leave the palace forthwith, and do not let me find you here again unless summoned to audience."

Kang Yi declares that we shall never take the Legations so long as Jung Lu continues to exercise his present great influence at Court. Li Shan, who is also a great favourite of the Empress Dowager, is now on the side of those who would make peace with the foreigners, and has been impeached for it by Na T'ung.

The following proclamation is now placarded all over

the city, in accordance with the Empress Dowager's orders issued to Prince Chuang. They say that she means to pay the rewards from her own privy purse:—

"REWARDS.

"Now that all foreign churches and chapels have been razed to the ground, and that no place of refuge or concealment is left for the foreigners, they must unavoidably scatter, flying in every direction. Be it therefore known and announced to all men, scholars and volunteers, that any person found guilty of harbouring foreigners will incur the penalty of decapitation. For every male foreigner taken alive a reward of 50 taels will be given; for every female 40 taels, and for every child 30 taels; but it is to be clearly understood that they shall be taken alive, and that they shall be genuine foreigners. Once this fact has been duly authenticated, the reward will be paid without delay. A special proclamation, requiring reverent obedience."

Much larger rewards than these were paid in the tenth year of Hsieng-Feng (1860) for the heads of barbarians, but of course in those days they were comparatively rare, whereas now, alas, they have become as common as bees!

This morning an important trial took place outside the gate of Prince Chuang's palace; Yi Ku, Fen Ch'e, and Kuei Ch'un presided. Over nine hundred people were summarily executed by the Boxers, in some cases before any proofs whatsoever had been substantiated in regard to their alleged connection with foreigners. Helpless babes even were amongst the slain. Fen Ch'e is nothing more than a butcher and the Old Buddha remonstrated with Prince Chuang for not keeping the Boxers in better order.

8th Day of the 6th Moon, 11 A.M. (July 4th).—Yü Hsien's son-in-law, Chi Shou-ch'eng, came and talked with me for a long while. The bombardment of the city was going on all the time he was here, and to the south of my house, close to the Imperial City wall, the troops of Li Ping-heng were mounting cannon on an elevated platform. They are all still very wroth with Jung Lu, who refuses to lend his guns, and his troops are so faithful to him that it is impossible to bribe them to disobey him.

Jung Lu's courage is really extraordinary; he said of himself lately, that "in the days of the wicked Ruler (meaning Prince Tuan) he bided his time on the shores of the bleak North Sea, awaiting the purification of the Empire."[1] I am told that Prince Tuan has taken possession of one of the Imperial Seals, so as to be able to proclaim his son Emperor at the first favourable opportunity; but if the Old Buddha finds this out, as most probably she will, there is trouble ahead for Prince Tuan.

Chi Shou-ch'eng tells me that Yü Hsien has sent in a memorial to the Empress Dowager with reference to the missionaries in Shansi. Ten days ago she had sent him a secret Decree, saying: "Slay all foreigners wheresoever you find them; even though they be prepared to leave your province, yet must they be slain." It seems that the Old Buddha ordered that this Decree should be sent to every high provincial official in the Empire, but it is now reported that Tuan Fang, the acting governor of Shensi, and Yü Chang, governor of Honan, together with the high officials in Mongolia, received the Edict in a very different form, for the word "slay" had been changed to "protect." It is feared that some treacherous Minister is responsible for this, but no one dares inform Her Majesty. To Yü Hsien's latest memorial, she has made the following reply, which has been sent by the fastest express riders to T'ai-Yüan fu: "I command that all foreigners—men, women, and children, old and young—be summarily executed. Let not one escape, so that my Empire may be purged of this noisome source of corruption, and that peace may be restored to my loyal subjects." Chi Shou-ch'eng tells me that Yü Hsien's bitterness against foreigners is inspired by his wife, of whom he is greatly afraid. He himself has earned golden opinions in T'aiyüan during his short administration, and has a high reputation for even-handed justice. He says also that this last Decree gave pleasure to Prince Chuang; Jung Lu tried to stop it, asking the Old Buddha what glory could China expect to gain by the slaughter of women and children. "We should

[1] Quotation from Mencius.

become the laughing-stock of the world," he said, "and the Old Buddha's widespread fame and reputation for benevolence would be grievously injured." "Yes," replied the Empress Dowager, "but these foreigners of yours wish to see me deposed, and I am only paying off old scores. Ever since the days of Tao-Kuang this uproarious guest within our borders has been maltreating his hosts, and it is time that all should know who is the real master of the house."

Yesterday afternoon the Empress Dowager crossed over to the Lake Palace for a water picnic, attended by several ladies of the Court. The continuous bombardment of the French cathedral eventually made her head ache, so she despatched a chamberlain to the officer commanding at the Hsi-Hua Gate, ordering them to cease firing until her return to the Forbidden City.

11th Day of the 6th Moon (7th July).—Yü Lu has sent in a ridiculous memorial, reporting the capture of four camels, as well as the killing of many foreigners, in Tientsin. Jung Lu has advised him to cease attacking the foreign Settlements. Talking of Jung Lu, I hear that Tung Fu-hsiang recently hired a Manchu soldier to assassinate him, but, instead of doing so, the man betrayed the plot to Jung Lu. This soldier turns out to be a brother of that En Hai who slew the foreign devil (Baron von Ketteler), and Tung thought therefore that he would gladly do anything to assist in destroying the Legations. But he is a clansman of Jung Lu's banner, and, like Yü Kung-ssŭ, whom Mencius called the best archer in Wei, "he could not bear to slay the old Chief who had taught him the arts of war." Jung Lu has again memorialised the Old Buddha, reminding her of that well-known saying in the *Spring and Autumn Annals,*[1] which lays down that the persons of foreign Envoys are always inviolate within the territories of any civilised State. This attack on the Legation, he says, is worse than an outrage; it is a piece of stupidity which will be remembered against China for

[1] History of events under the Chou dynasty, by Confucius, one of the Five Classics.

all time. Her Majesty appeared to think that, because a small nation like the Transvaal could conquer a great Power like England, China must necessarily be even more successful in fighting the whole world; but there was no analogy between the two cases. If peace were to be made at once, the situation might still be saved; but if the Legations were demolished, there must be an end of Manchu rule. He warned Her Majesty solemnly, and she appears to be gradually coming to look at things from his point of view. These Boxers can certainly talk, but they do very little.

Bad news has reached the palace to-day of the fighting around Tientsin, and Her Majesty is most anxious about it, though she still refuses to believe that the foreign brigands can possibly enter Peking.

15*th Day of the 6th Moon* (11th July).—My neighbour Wen Lien, Comptroller-General of the Imperial Household, tells me that the Old Buddha is in a furious rage. She finds the heat trying, and yesterday she turned on the Heir Apparent and snubbed him badly for impertinence; he had asked if he might be permitted to escort her to Jehol, leaving the Emperor to settle matters with his foreign friends in Peking. One of the young eunuchs tried to mollify her by reporting, whenever the report of a gun was heard, that another foreign devil had been killed, but as the Old Buddha observed, "there has been enough firing for the past few weeks to kill off every foreigner in China several times, and so far there is hardly anything to show for it."

17*th Day of the 6th Moon* (13th July).—Jung Lu asked Her Majesty yesterday what she would do if the Boxers were defeated, and if Peking were captured by the foreigners. In reply, she quoted to him the words of Chia Yi, a sophist of the Han dynasty, in reference to the Court's diplomatic dealings with the Khan of the Hans:—

"If the Emperor wishes to gain the allegiance of other countries, he can only do so by convincing their rulers that he possesses the three cardinal virtues of government, and by displaying the five allurements.

These allurements are: (1) Presents of chariots and rich robes, to tempt the eye; (2) rich food and banquets, to tempt the palate; (3) musical maidens, to tempt the ear; (4) fine houses and beautiful women, to tempt the instinct of luxury; and (5) the presence of the Emperor at the table of the foreign ruler, to tempt his pride.

The three cardinal virtues of government are: (1) to simulate affection; (2) to express honeyed sentiments; and (3) to treat one's inferiors as equals."

Two years ago, said the Empress, she had invited the foreign ladies to her Court, and had noticed their delight at the reception she gave them, although she well knew that their sympathies were with the Emperor, and against her. She would again allure them to her side with rich gifts and honeyed words.[1]

20th Day of the 6th Moon (16th July).—Bad news from Yü Lu; Tientsin has been captured by the foreigners, who now swarm like locusts. Not one of the Grand Councillors dared to carry the news to Her Majesty, so Prince Tuan went in boldly, and informed her that the foreign devils had taken the city, because the Boxers had been negligent in the performance of their prescribed rites; Peking, however, would always be perfectly safe from invasion. Early this morning Jung Lu had informed the Old Buddha that he had ascertained beyond doubt that the document, which purported to come from the Foreign Ministers, demanding her abdication, was a forgery. It had been prepared by Lien Wen-chung, a Secretary of the Grand Council, at Prince Tuan's orders. The Old Buddha was therefore in no soft mood; angrily she told Prince Tuan that, if the foreigners entered Peking, he would certainly lose his head. She was quite aware of his motives; he wanted to secure the Regency, but she bade him beware, for, so long as she lived, there could be no other Regent. "Let him be careful, or his son would be expelled from the

[1] How well and successfully she did it, has been told in Miss Catherine A. Carl's book, *With the Empress Dowager of China*. The painting of her portrait for the St. Louis Exhibition was in itself an example of Tzü Hsi's "cardinal virtues of government," which she practised with conspicuous success on the simple-minded wife of the American Minister, Mrs. Conger. (*Vide* CORDIER: *Relations de la Chine*, Vol. III., p. 423.)

palace, and the family estates confiscated to the Throne." His actions had indeed been worthy of the dog's [1] name he bore. Prince Tuan left the palace, and was heard to remark that "the thunderbolt had fallen too quickly for him to close his ears."

Jung Lu has won over all the military commanders except Tung Fu-hsiang and his staff, and they have come to a general understanding that the bombardment of the Legations must cease. Jung Lu has explained, as his reason for not allowing the heavy artillery to be used, that it would inevitably have inflicted serious damage on the Imperial shrines and the Ancestral temple.

The Old Buddha is sending presents to the Legations, water-melons, wine, vegetables, and ice, and she has expressed a wish that Prince Ch'ing should go and see the Foreign Ministers.

They say that Hsü Ching-ch'eng is secretly communicating with the Legations.

A messenger with twelve despatches from the Legations was captured to-day and taken to Prince Chuang's palace. Three of the twelve were in cipher and could not be translated by the Tsung-li Yamên interpreter, but from the others it was learned that the foreigners had lost over a hundred killed and wounded and that their provisions were running very low.

Chi Shou-ch'eng has gone to T'ai Yüan-fu to see Yü Hsien, his father-in-law. The latter has memorialised the Throne, reporting that he cunningly entrapped all the foreigners, cast them into chains and had every one decapitated in his Yamên. Only one woman had escaped, after her breasts had been cut off, and had hidden herself under the city wall. She was dead when they found her.

Rain has fallen very heavily to-day. Liu Ta-chiao brought me 8 lb. of pork from the palace kitchen, and I sent a large bowl of it to my married sister. Towards

[1] The second character of Prince Tuan's name contained the radical sign for *dog*, and was given him by the Emperor Hsien-Feng, because he had been begotten during the period of mourning for his parent Tao-Kuang ; it being an offence, under Chinese law, for a son to be begotten during the twenty-seven months of mourning for father or mother.

evening a detachment of cavalry, with several guns, passed my door. They were Li Ping-heng's men, on their way to mount these guns on a platform above the Forbidden City wall, as a precaution against sorties by the foreigners. There has been heavy firing all night, and it is reported that foreign devils have been seen in the neighbourhood of the Ha-Ta Men.

21st Day of the 6th Moon (17th July).—A lovely day. I walked over to call on Prince Li and Duke Lan. The latest rumour is that Yü Lu's troops are in flight and harrying the country side. They are said to be clamouring for their pay, which is months in arrears, and have plundered both Tungchou and Chang Chia-wan most thoroughly. Both the eastern gates of the City are now kept closed, and the northern gate (Anting men) is only opened occasionally.

Yang Shun, the gate-keeper, has returned from his home at Pao-ti-hsien, east of Peking, where he reports things fairly quiet.

Li Ping-heng's troops are reported to have won a great victory and driven the barbarians to the sea. Nevertheless, heavy firing was heard to the south-eastward this afternoon.

Duke Lan has gone out with a large force of Boxers to search for converts reported to be in hiding in the Temple of the Sun.

27th Day of the 6th Moon (23rd July).—This morning Yüan Ch'ang and Hsü Ching-ch'eng handed in the third of their Memorials against the Boxers, in which they recommend the execution of several members of the Grand Council. Their valour seems to be more laudable than their discretion, especially as the Old Buddha is disposed once more to believe in the Boxers as the result of Li Ping-heng's audience with her yesterday. He came up from Hankow, and has now been appointed joint commander, with Jung Lu, of the army of the north. He confidently assured her of his ability to take the Legations by storm, and repeatedly said that never again would the tutelary deities of the Dynasty suffer her to be driven forth, in humiliation, from her capital.

I went across to Duke Lan's house this morning and found Prince Tuan and Li Ping-heng there. They were busy planning a renewed attack on the Legations, and Li was strongly in favour of mining from the Han-lin Academy side. He has advised the Empress Dowager that a mine should be sprung, as was done lately at the French Cathedral, and he is convinced that in the ensuing confusion the foreigners would be easily overwhelmed.

After reading the latest Memorial of Hsü and Yüan, the Old Buddha observed: "These are brave men. I have never cared much for Hsü, but Yüan behaved well in 1898 and warned me about K'ang Yu-wei and his plotting. Be that as it may, however, they have no business to worry me with these persistent and querulous questions. The Throne itself is fully competent to judge the character of its servants, and it is a gross misconception of duty for 'the acolyte to stride across the sacred vessels and show the priest how to slaughter the sacrificial beasts.'[1] Desiring to deal leniently with the Memorialists, I command that my censure be communicated to them and that they take heed to refrain in future from troubling my ears with their petulant complainings."

3rd Day of the 7th Moon (28th July).—The Old Buddha places much confidence in Li Ping-heng. Yesterday he and Kang Yi discovered that the word "to slay," in Her Majesty's Decree ordering the extermination of all foreigners, had been altered to "protect" by Yüan Ch'ang and Hsü Ching-ch'eng. I have just seen Kang Yi, and he says that Her Majesty's face was divine in its wrath. "They deserve the punishment meted out to Kao ch'u-mi,"[2] she said, "their limbs should be torn asunder by chariots driven in opposite directions. Let them be summarily decapitated." An Edict was forthwith issued, but no mention is made in it of the alteration of the Decree, as this is a matter affecting the nation's prestige; the offenders are

[1] A classical allusion, in common use, equivalent to "Ne sutor ultra crepidam."

[2] A traitor whose crime and punishment are recorded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

denounced only for having created dissensions in the palace and favoured the cause of the foreigner. Both were executed this morning; my son, En Ming, witnessed their death. It is most painful to me to think of the end of Yüan Ch'ang, for he had many sterling qualities; as for Hsü, I knew him in the days when we were colleagues at the Grand Secretariat, and I never had a high opinion of the man. His corruption was notorious. Just before the sword of the executioner fell, Yüan remarked that "he hoped that the Sun might soon return to its place in the Heaven, and that the usurping Comet might be destroyed." By this he meant that Prince Tuan's malign influence had led the Empress Dowager to act against her own better instincts. Duke Lan, who was superintending the execution, angrily bade him be silent for a traitor, but Yüan fearlessly went on: "I die innocent. In years to come my name will be remembered with gratitude and respect, long after you evil-plotting Princes have met your well-deserved doom." Turning then to Hsü, he said: "We shall meet anon at the Yellow Springs.[1] To die is only to come home." Duke Lan stepped forward as if to strike him, and the headsman quickly despatched them both.

8th Day of the 7th Moon (3rd August).—I have had much trouble with my eldest son to-day. He has been robbing me lately of large sums, and when I rebuked him he had the audacity to reply that my duty to the Throne would make my suicide a fitting return for the benefits which I have received at its hands.

Li Ping-heng has gone to the front to rally the troops and check the foreigners' advance. He has impeached Jung Lu but the Old Buddha has suppressed the Memorial. The Emperor thanked Jung Lu for his services, and the Commander-in-Chief replied that he of all the servants of the Throne never expected to receive praise from His Majesty, considering the events of the past two years.[2]

11th Day of the 7th Moon (5th August).—The Old Buddha has commanded Jung Lu to arrange for escorting

[1] A classical expression, meaning the Spirit-world.
[2] Referring to his part in the *coup d'état* of 1898.

the foreigners to Tientsin, so that the advance of the Allies may be stopped. In this connection, I hear that not many days ago, Na T'ung persuaded Ch'i Hsiu to have a letter sent to the Foreign Ministers, inviting them to come, without escort of troops, to an interview with the Tsung-li Yamên, his idea being to have them all massacred on the way. Ch'i Hsiu thought the suggestion excellent, but, although several letters have been sent proposing it, the Ministers decline to leave the Legations. Meanwhile, there have been several fresh attacks on the Legations during the past few days.

A foreign devil, half naked, was found yesterday in Hatamen Street. He "ko-towed" to everyone he met, high class or low, imploring even the rag-pickers to spare his life and give him a few cash. "We shall all be massacred soon," he said, "but I have done no wrong." One of Jung Lu's sergeants seized him and took him to the Commander-in-Chief's residence. Instead of decapitating him, Jung Lu sent him back. This shows, however, the desperate straits to which the foreigners are reduced.

15*th Day of the 7th Moon* (9th August).—Bad news from the South. Yü Lu's forces have been defeated and the foreigners are approaching nearer every day. The Old Buddha is meditating flight to Jehol, but Jung Lu strongly urges her to remain, even if the Allies should enter the city. Duke Lan scoffs at the idea of their being able to do so. One comfort is that, if they do come, they will not loot or kill. I remember well how good their discipline was forty years ago. I never stirred out of my house and not one of the barbarians ever came near it. We had a little difficulty about getting victuals, but the foreigners hardly came into the city, and did us no harm.

16*th Day of the 7th Moon* (10th August).—My old colleague, Li Shan, whose house adjoins the French Cathedral, has been accused of making a subterranean passage and thus assisting the foreigners with supplies. He has been handed over to the Board of Punishments by Prince Tuan, without the knowledge of the Empress Dowager, together with Hsü Yung-yi and Lien Yuan.

Prince Tuan has long had a grudge against Hsü for having expressed disapproval of the selection of the Heir Apparent. As to Lien, they say that his arrest is due to Na T'ung, and his offence is that he was on terms of intimacy with Yüan Ch'ang. All three prisoners were decapitated this morning. Hsü Yung-yi was older than I am (seventy-nine) and his death is a lamentable business indeed. But he went to his death calmly and without complaint when he learned that the Empress Dowager knew nothing of the matter and that it was Prince Tuan's doing alone. "The power of the usurper," said he, "is short-lived. As for me, I am glad to die before the foreigners take Peking." The Old Buddha will be very wroth when she hears that two Manchus have thus been put to death. Li Shan and Jung Lu were old friends.

A certain General Liu, from Shansi, assured the Empress this morning that he would undertake to demolish the Legations in three days, and this would so alarm the Allies that their advance would certainly be stopped. A furious bombardment has just begun.

The Boxers have proved themselves utterly useless. I always said they never would do anything.

18*th Day of the 7th Moon* (12th August).—The foreigners are getting nearer and nearer. Yü Lu shot himself with a revolver on the 12th at Ts'ai Ts'un. He had taken refuge in a coffin shop, of all ill-omened places! His troops had been utterly routed thrice, at Pei Ts'ang, Yang Ts'un and at Ts'ai Ts'un. Li Ping-heng reached Ho-hsi-wu on the 14th, but in spite of all his efforts to rally our forces, the two divisional leaders, Chang Ch'un-fa and Ch'en Tse-lin, refused to fight. Li Ping-heng therefore took poison. Jung Lu went to-day to break the news to the Old Buddha: Sovereign and Minister wept together at the disasters which these Princes and rebels have brought upon our glorious Empire. Jung Lu refrained from any attempt at self-justification; he is a wise man. The Old Buddha said she would commit suicide and make the Emperor do the same, rather than leave her capital. Jung Lu besought her to take his advice, which was to remain in Peking and to

issue Decrees ordering the decapitation of Prince Tuan and his followers, thus proving her innocence to the world. But she seems to cling still to a hope that the supernatural powers of the Boxers may save Peking, and so the furious bombardment of the Legations continues.

Eight audiences have been given to-day to Jung Lu and five to Prince Tuan. All the other members of the Grand Council sat with folded hands, suggesting nothing.

20th Day (14th August), 5 P.M.—T'ungchou has fallen and now the foreigners have begun to bombard the city. The Grand Council has been summoned to five meetings to-day in the Palace of Peaceful Longevity: Her Majesty is reported to be starting for Kalgan. At the hour of the Monkey (4 P.M.) Duke Lan burst into the Palace, unannounced, and shouted, "Old Buddha, the foreign devils have come!" Close upon his footsteps came Kang Yi, who reported that a large force of turbaned soldiery were encamped in the enclosure of the Temple of Heaven. "Perhaps they are our Mahommedan braves from Kansuh," said Her Majesty, "come to demolish the Legations?" "No," replied Kang Yi, "they are foreign devils. Your Majesty must escape at once, or they will murder you."

Later, midnight.—There has just been an Audience given to the Grand Council in the Palace, at which Kang Yi, Chao Shu-ch'iao and Wang Wen-shao were present. "Where are the others?" said the Old Buddha. "Gone, I suppose, everyone to his own home, leaving us here, Mother and Son,[1] to look after ourselves as best we may. At all events, you three must now accompany me on my journey." Turning to Wang Wen-shao, she added: "You are too old, and I could not bear the thought of exposing you to such hardships. Make such speed as you can and join me later." Then to the other two she said: "You two are good riders. It will be your duty never to lose sight of me for an instant." Wang Wen-shao replied: "I will hasten after Your Majesty to the best of my ability." The Emperor, who seemed surprisingly alert and vigorous, here joined in: "Yes, by all means, follow

[1] The Emperor was her adopted son.

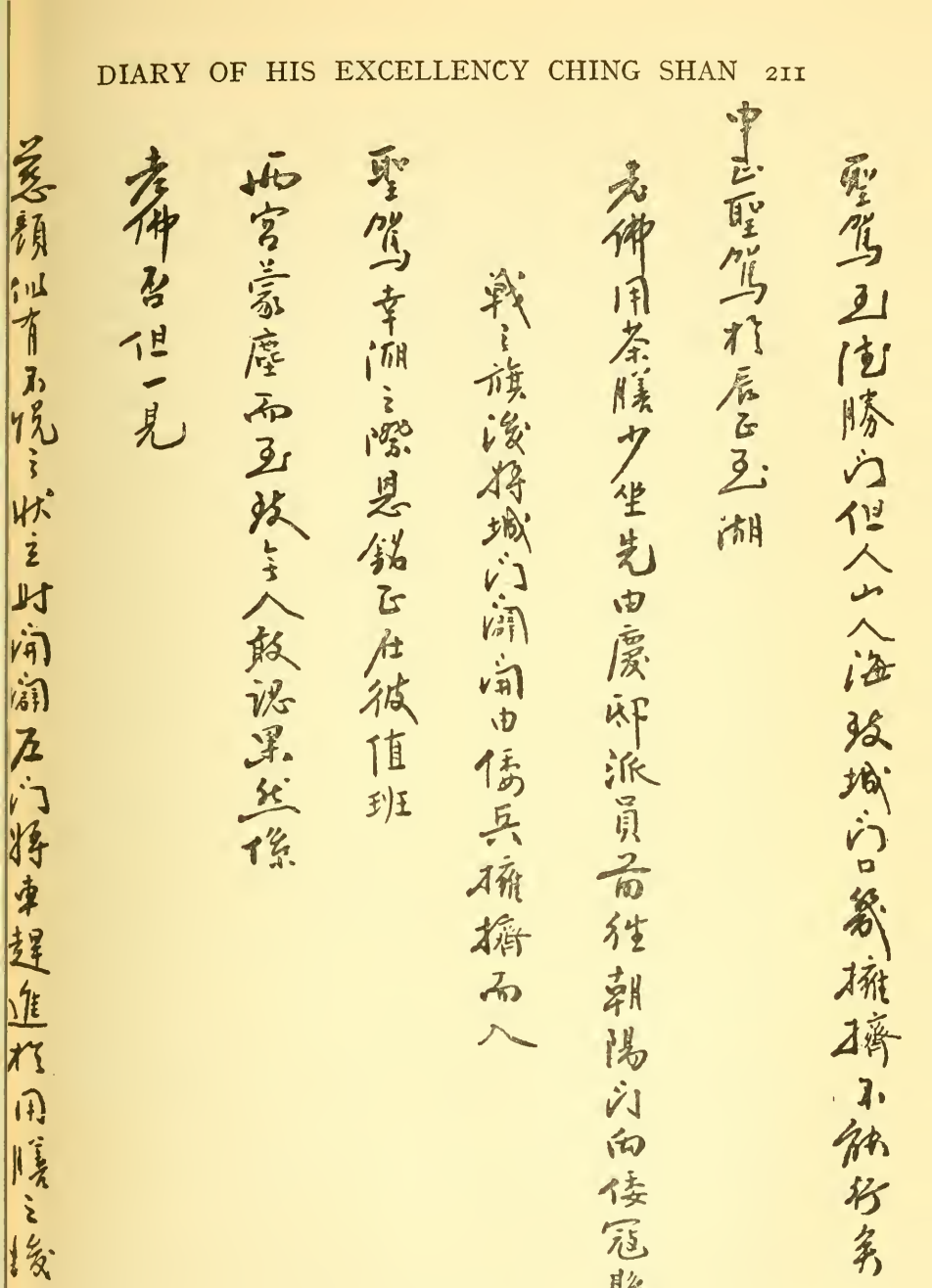
as quickly as you can." This ended the audience, but the actual hour of Her Majesty's departure remains uncertain. Jung Lu's attendance was impossible because he was busy trying to rally our forces.

21st Day (15th August).—When Lien tells me that the Old Buddha arose this morning at the Hour of the Tiger (3 A.M.) after only an hour's rest, and dressed herself hurriedly in the common blue cloth garments of a peasant woman, which she had ordered to be prepared. For the first time in her life, her hair was done up in the Chinese fashion. "Who could ever have believed that it would come to this?" she said. Three common carts were brought into the palace; their drivers wore no official hats.

All the Concubines were summoned to appear before Her Majesty at 3.30 A.M.; she had previously issued a decree that none of them would accompany her for the present. The Pearl Concubine, who had always been insubordinate to the Old Buddha, came with the rest and actually dared to suggest that the Emperor should remain in Peking. The Empress was in no mood for argument. Without a moment's hesitation, she shouted to the eunuchs on duty: "Throw this wretched minion down the well!" At this the Emperor, who was greatly grieved, fell on his knees in supplication, but the Empress angrily bade him desist, saying that this was no time for bandying words. "Let her die at once," she said, "as a warning to all undutiful children, and to those 'hsiao' birds[1] who, when fledged, peck out their own mother's eyes." So the eunuchs Li and Sung took the Pearl Concubine and cast her down the large well which is just outside the Ning Shou Palace.

Then to the Emperor, who stood trembling with grief and wrath, she said: "Get into your cart and hang up the screen, so that you be not recognised" (he was wearing a long gown of black gauze and black cloth trousers). Swiftly then the Old Buddha gave her orders. "P'u Lun, you will ride on the shaft of the Emperor's cart and look after him. I shall travel in the other cart, and you, P'u

[1] A species of owl—classical reference.



FACSIMILE OF A FRAGMENT OF THE DIARY

Chün (the Heir Apparent) will ride on the shaft. Li Lien-ying, I know you are a poor rider, but you must shift as best you can to keep up with us." At this critical moment it seemed as if the Old Buddha alone retained her presence of mind. "Drive your hardest," she said to the carters, "and if any foreign devil should stop you, say nothing. I will speak to them and explain that we are but poor country folk, fleeing to our homes. Go first to the Summer Palace." Thereupon the carts started, passing out through the northern gate of the palace (The Gate of Military Prowess) while all the members of the Household and the Imperial Concubines prostrated themselves, wishing Their Majesties a long life. Only the three Grand Councillors followed on horseback, a rendezvous having been arranged for other officials at the Summer Palace. My neighbour Wen Lien, the Comptroller of the Household, followed Their Majesties at a distance, to see them safely out of the city. They left by the "Te-sheng-Mên," or Gate of Victory, on the north-west side of the city, where for a time their carts were blocked in the dense mass of refugees passing out that way.

4 P.M.—The Sacred Chariot of Her Majesty reached the Summer Palace at about 8 A.M. and Their Majesties remained there an hour. Meanwhile, at 6 A.M., Prince Ch'ing, just before starting for the Summer Palace, sent a flag of truce to the Japanese Pigmies who were bombarding the city close to the "Ch'i Hua" gate on the east of the city. The gate was thrown open and the troops swarmed in.

My son En Ming was on duty at the Summer Palace with a few of his men, when the Imperial party arrived, all bedraggled and dust-begrimed. The soldiers at the palace gate could not believe that this was really their Imperial mistress until the Old Buddha angrily asked whether they failed to recognise her. The carts were driven in through the side entrance, and tea was served. Her Majesty gave orders that all curios, valuables, and ornaments were to be packed at once and sent off to Jehol; at the same time she despatched one of the eunuchs to Peking to tell the

Empress[1] to bury quickly every scrap of treasure in the Forbidden City, hiding it in the courtyard of the Ning Shou Palace.

The Princes Tuan, Ching, Na, and Su joined Their Majesties at the Summer Palace; a few Dukes were there also, as well as Wu Shu-mei and Pu Hsing of the higher officials. About a dozen Secretaries from the different Boards, and three Clerks to the Grand Council, accompanied the Court from this point. General Ma Yu-k'un, with a force of 1000 men escorted Their Majesties to Kalgan, and there were, in addition, several hundreds of Prince Tuan's "Heavenly Tiger" Bannermen, fresh from their fruitless attacks on the Legations. Jung Lu is still endeavouring to rally his troops.

I have just heard of the death of my old friend, Hsü T'ung, the Imperial Tutor and Grand Secretary. He has hanged himself in his house and eighteen of his womenfolk have followed his example. He was a true patriot and a fine scholar. Alas, alas! From all sides I hear the same piteous story; the proudest of the Manchus have come to the same miserable end. The betrothed of Prince Ch'un, whom he was to have married next month, has committed suicide, with all her family. It is indeed pitiful.[2]

Thus, for the second time in her life, the Old Buddha has had to flee from her Sacred City, like the Son of Heaven in the Chou Dynasty, who "fled with dust-covered head." The failure of the southern provinces to join in the enterprise has ruined us. Prince Tuan was much to blame in being anti-Chinese. As Confucius said: "By the lack of broad-minded tolerance in small matters, a great design has been frustrated." After all, Jung Lu was right—the Boxers' so-called magic was nothing but child's talk. They were in reality no stronger than autumn thistledown. Alas, the bright flower of spring does not bloom twice!

My wife and the other women, stupidly obstinate like

[1] Consort of Kuang-Hsü, later Empress Dowager, known by the honorific title of Lung-yü.

[2] Prince Ch'un subsequently married Jung Lu's daughter, by special command of the Empress Dowager.

all females, intend to take opium. I cannot prevent them from doing so, but, for myself, I have no intention of doing anything so foolish. Already the foreign brigands are looting in other quarters of the city, but they will never find my hidden treasure, and I shall just remain here, old and feeble as I am. My son, En Ch'un, has disappeared since yesterday, and nearly all my servants have fled. There is no one to prepare my evening meal.

(*Here the Diary ends. The old man was murdered by his eldest son that same evening; all his women-folk had previously taken poison and died.*)

Vermilion Decree of H.M. Kuang Hsü, 24th day, 12th Moon of 25th year (24th January, 1900), *making Prince Tuan's son Heir Apparent.*

"In days of our tender infancy we succeeded by adoption to the Great Inheritance, and were favoured by the Empress Dowager, who graciously 'suspended the curtain' and administered the Government as Regent, earnestly labouring the while at our education in all matters. Since we assumed the reins of government, the nation has passed through severe crises, and our sole desire has been to govern the Empire wisely in order to requite the maternal benevolence of Her Majesty as well as to fulfil the arduous task imposed on us by His late Majesty.

"But since last year our constitution has been sore-stricken with illness, and we have undergone much anxiety lest the business of the State should suffer in consequence. Reflecting on the duty we owe to our sacred ancestors and to the Empire, we have therefore besought Her Majesty to administer the Government during the past year. Our sickness has so far shown no signs of improvement, and it has prevented us from performing all the important sacrifices at the ancestral shrines and at the altars of the gods of the soil.

"And now at this acute crisis, the spectacle of Her Majesty, labouring without cease in the profound seclusion of her palace, without relaxation or thought of rest, has filled us with dismay. We can neither sleep nor eat in the anxiety of our thoughts. Reflecting on the arduous labours of our ancestors from whom this great Heritage has descended to us, we are overwhelmed by our unfitness for this task of government. We bear in mind (and the fact is well known to all our subjects) that when first

we succeeded by adoption to the Throne, we were honoured with a Decree from the Empress Dowager to the effect that so soon as we should have begotten an heir, he should become the adopted son of His Majesty T'ung-Chih. But our protracted sickness renders it impossible for us to hope for a son, so that His late Majesty remains without heir. This question of the succession is of transcendent importance, and our grief, as we ponder the situation, fills us with feelings of the deepest self-abasement, and renders illusive all hope of our recovery from this sickness.

"We have accordingly prostrated ourselves in supplication before our Sacred Mother, begging that she may be pleased to select some worthy person from among the Princes of the Blood as heir to His Majesty T'ung-Chih, in order that the Great Inheritance may duly revert to him. As the result of our repeated entreaties Her Majesty has graciously consented, and has appointed P'u Chün, son of Prince Tuan, as heir by adoption to His late Majesty. Our gratitude at this is unbounded, and reverently we obey her behests, hereby appointing P'u Chün to be Heir Apparent and successor to the Throne. Let this Decree be made known throughout the Empire."

Seldom has history seen so tragically pathetic a document. It was not only a confession of his own illegality and an abdication, but his death-warrant, clear writ for all men to read. And the poor victim must perforce thank his executioner and praise the "maternal benevolence" of the woman whose uncontrollable love of power had wrecked his life from the cradle.

Memorial from the Censorate at Peking to the Throne at Hsi-an, describing the arrest of En Hai, the murderer of the German Minister, Baron von Ketteler.[1]

This Memorial affords a striking illustration of the sympathy which animated, and still animates, many of those nearest to the Throne in regard to the Boxers and their anti-foreign crusade, and their appreciation of the real sentiments of the Empress Dowager, even in defeat.

[1] This Memorial was never published officially, and Tzŭ Hsi refrained from issuing a Rescript thereto; it was forwarded by an official with the Court at Hsi-an to one of the vernacular papers at Shanghai, which published it.

It also throws light on the Chinese official's idea of heroism in a soldier.

"A spy in Japanese employ, engaged in searching for looted articles in the pawnshops of the district in Japanese military occupation, found among the unredeemed pledges in one shop a watch bearing Baron von Ketteler's monogram. The pawnbroker said that it had been pledged by a Bannerman named En Hai, who lived at a carter's inn of the Tartar city. This spy was a man named Te Lu, a writer attached to the Manchu Field Force, of the 8th squad of the 'Ting' Company. He went at once and informed the Japanese, who promptly sent a picquet to the inn mentioned. Two or three men were standing about in the courtyard, and the soldiers asked one of them whether En Hai was there. 'I'm the man,' said he, whereupon they took him prisoner. Under examination, En was perfectly calm and showed no sort of emotion. The presiding Magistrate enquired: 'Was it you who slew the German Minister?' He replied: 'I received orders from my Sergeant to kill every foreigner that came up the street. I am a soldier, and I only know it is my duty to obey orders. On that day I was with my men, some thirty of them, in the street, when a foreigner came along in a sedan chair. At once I took up my stand a little to the side of the street, and, taking careful aim, fired into the chair. Thereupon the bearers fled: we went up to the chair, dragged the foreigner out, and saw that he was dead. I felt a watch in his breast pocket and took it as my lawful share; my comrades appropriated a revolver, some rings and other articles. I never thought that this watch would lead to my detection, but I am glad to die for having killed one of the enemies of my country. Please behead me at once.'

"The interpreter asked him whether he was drunk at the time. He laughed and said, 'Wine's a fine thing, and I can put away four or five catties at a time, but that day I had not touched a drop. Do you suppose I would try to screen myself on the score of being in liquor?' This En Hai appears to have been an honest fellow; his words were brave and dignified, so that the bystanders all realised that China is not without heroes in the ranks of her army. On the following day he was handed over to the Germans, and beheaded on the scene of his exploit. We, your Memorialists, feel that Your Majesties should be made acquainted with his meritorious behaviour, and we therefore report the above facts. We are of opinion that his name should not be permitted to fall into oblivion, and we trust that Your Majesties may be pleased to confer upon him honours as in the case of one who has fallen in battle with his face to the foe."

XV

THE FLIGHT FROM PEKING AND THE COURT IN EXILE

The diarist, Ching Shan, has described in detail the flight of the Empress Dowager and Emperor from Peking, before dawn, on the morning of the 15th August. From an account of the Court's journey, subsequently written by the Grand Secretary, Wang Wen-shao, to friends in Chêkiang, and published in one of the vernacular papers of Shanghai, we obtain valuable corroboration of the diarist's accuracy, together with much interesting information.

Wang Wen-shao overtook Their Majesties at Huai-lai on the 18th August; for the past three days they had suffered dangers and hardships innumerable. On the evening of the 19th they had stopped at Kuanshih (seventy li from Peking), where they slept in the Mosque. There the Mahommedan trading firm of "Tung Kuang yü" (the well-known contractors for the hire of pack animals for the northern caravan trade) had supplied them with the best of the poor food available—coarse flour, vegetables, and millet porridge—and had provided mule litters for the next stage of the journey. As the troops of the escort had been ordered to remain at some distance behind, so long as there was any risk of pursuit by the Allies' cavalry, Their Majesties' arrival was unannounced, and their identity unsuspected. As they descended from their carts, travel-stained, weary, and distressed, they were surrounded by a large crowd of refugee idlers and villagers, eager for news from the capital. An eye-witness of the scene has reported that, looking nervously about him, the Emperor said, "We have to thank the Boxers for this," whereupon the Old Buddha, undaunted even at the height of her misfortunes, bade him be silent.

Next day they travelled, by mule litter, ninety li (thirty-two miles) and spent the night at Ch'a-Tao, just beyond the Great Wall. Here no preparations of any kind had been made for their reception, and they suffered much hardship, sleeping on the brick platform (k'ang) without any adequate bedding. But the Magistrate of Yen-Ch'ing chou had been able to find a blue sedan-chair for Her Majesty, who had thus travelled part of the day in greater comfort. Also at midday, stopping to eat at Chü-yung kuan, Li Lien-ying, the chief eunuch, had obtained a few teacups from the villagers.

On the 16th they travelled from Ch'a-Tao to Huai-lai, a hard stage of fifty li. Some of the officials and Chamberlains of the Court now joined Their Majesties, so that the party consisted of seventeen carts, in addition to the Old Buddha's palanquin and the Emperor's mule litter. As the *cortège* advanced, and the news of their flight was spread abroad, rumours began to be circulated that they were pretenders, personating the Son of Heaven and the Old Buddha, rumours due, no doubt, to the fact that Her Majesty was still wearing her hair in the Chinese manner, and that her clothes were the common ones in which she had escaped from the Forbidden City. In spite of these rumours the Magistrate of Huai-lai, a Hupeh man (Wu Yung), had received no intimation of Their Majesties' coming, and, when the Imperial party, accompanied by an enormous crowd, entered his Yamên, he had no time to put on his official robes, but rushed down to receive them as he was. After prostrating himself, he wanted to clear out the noisy and inquisitive rabble, but the Old Buddha forbade him, saying: "Not so; let them crowd around us as much as they like. It amuses me to see these honest country folk." Here, after three days of coarse fare, the Empress Dowager rejoiced once more in a meal of birds'-nest soup and sharks' fins, presented by the Magistrate, who also furnished her with an outfit of woman's clothing and suits for the Emperor and the Heir Apparent, for all of which he received Her Majesty's repeated and grateful thanks.

It was here, at Huai-lai, while the Court was taking a day's rest, that Wang Wen-shao came up with them. He was cordially, even affectionately, greeted by the Old Buddha, who condoled with him on the hardships to which he had been exposed, and insisted on his sharing her birds'-nest soup, which, she said, he would surely enjoy as much as she had done after so many and great privations. She rebuked the Emperor for not greeting the aged Councillor with warm thanks for his touching devotion to the Throne.

From Huai-lai, Prince Ch'ing was ordered to return to Peking to negotiate terms of peace with the Allies. Knowing the difficulties of this task, he went reluctantly; before leaving he had a long audience with Her Majesty, who assured him of her complete confidence in his ability to make terms, and bade him adopt a policy similar to that of Prince Kung in 1860.

Wang Wen-shao's account of the first part of the Court's journey is sufficiently interesting to justify textual reproduction.

"Their Majesties fled from the palace at the dawn of day in common carts. It was only after their arrival at Kuan-shih that they were provided with litters. The Emperor and Prince Pu' Lun rode on one cart until their arrival at Huai-lai, where the District Magistrate furnished a palanquin, and later on, at Hsüan-hua, four large sedan chairs were found for the Imperial party. It was at this point that the Emperor's Consort overtook Their Majesties.

"So hurried was the flight that no spare clothes had been taken; the Empress Dowager was very shabbily dressed, so as to be almost unrecognisable, the Chinese mode of hair-dressing producing a very remarkable alteration in her appearance. On the first night after leaving Peking, they slept, like travellers of the lowest class, on the raised brick platform of the inn, where not even rice was obtainable for the evening meal, so that they were compelled to eat common porridge made of millet. In all the disasters recorded in history, never has there been such a pitiful spectacle.

"It was only after reaching Huai-lai that their condition improved somewhat, but even then the number of personal attendants and eunuchs was very small, and not a single concubine was there to wait upon the Old Buddha. For the first few days' flight, neither Prince Li, nor Jung Lu, nor Ch'i Hsiu

(all of them Grand Councillors), were in attendance so that Her Majesty nominated Prince Tuan to serve on the Council. She reviled him at the outset severely, reproaching him for the misfortunes which had overtaken the Dynasty, but as time went on, as he shared with her the privations and troubles of the day's journey, she became more gracious towards him. This was to some extent due to the very great influence which Prince Tuan's wife exercised at Court.

"When I reached Huai-lai, the Court consisted of the Princes Tuan, Ch'ing, Na, Su, and P'u Lun, with a following of high officials led by Kang Yi, and some twenty Secretaries. General Ma's troops and some of the Banner Corps of Prince Tuan formed the Imperial escort; and they plundered every town and village on their line of march. This, however, is hardly remarkable, because all the shops had been closed and there were no provisions to be purchased anywhere.

"To go back for a few days. Yü Lu (Viceroy of Chihli) shot himself in a coffin shop at a place south of the Hunting Park, and Li Ping-heng took poison after the defeat of his troops at T'ungchou. The Court's flight had already been discussed after the first advance of the Allies from T'ungchou towards Peking; but the difficulty in providing sufficient transport was considered insuperable. On the 19th of the Moon a steady cannonade began at about midnight, and from my house in Magpie Lane, one could note, by the volume of sound, that the attack was steadily advancing closer to the city, and eventually bullets came whistling as thick as hail. The bombardment reached its height at about noon on the 20th, when news was brought that two gates of the Imperial City had been taken by storm. I was unable to verify this report. It was my turn for night duty at the Palace, but after the last audience, I was unable to enter the Forbidden City, as all its gates were barred. It was only at 7 A.M. on the 21st inst. (August 15th) that I was able to gain admittance to the Forbidden City, and then I learned that Their Majesties had hurriedly fled. On the previous day five urgent audiences with the Grand Council had been held; at the last of these only Kang Yi, Chao Shu-ch'iao, and myself were present. Sadly regarding us, the Old Buddha said, 'I see there are only three of you left. No doubt all the rest have fled, leaving us, mother and son, to our fate. I want you all to come with me on my journey.' Turning to me she then said, 'You are too old. I would not wish you to share in all this hardship. Follow us as best you can later on.' The Emperor expressed his wishes in the same sense.

"By this time it was nearly midnight, and they still hesitated about leaving the city; judge then of my surprise to learn that, at the first streak of dawn, Their Majesties had left the city in indescribable disorder and frantic haste. I could not return to

my house that day because all the gates of the Imperial City were closed, but at 10 A.M. on the following day, I made my way out of the Houmen.[1] On my way I came across Jung Lu; he had fainted in his chair, and had been forsaken by his cowardly bearers. He said: 'This is the end. You and I never believed in these Boxers; see now to what a pass they have brought the Old Buddha. If you see Her Majesty, tell her that I have gone to rally the troops, and that, if I live, I will join her later on.'

"After leaving Jung Lu I made my way to a little temple which lies midway between the North and the North-West Gates of the city, and there I rested a while. It was the opinion of the Abbot in charge that the foreigners would burn every temple of the city, as all of them had been used by the Boxers for their magic rites, and he said that, in times of dire peril, such as this, it was really inconvenient for him to offer any hospitality to visitors. Just at this moment news was brought us that the foreign troops were on the wall of the city, between the two gates nearest to us, and that they were firing down upon the streets; the city was already invested, but the foreigners were not molesting civilians, though they were shooting all 'braves' and men in uniform. As the priest declined to receive me, I sought refuge at the house of a man named Han, retainer in the Imperial Household, who lived close by. All my chair-bearers and servants had fled. Shortly after noon I heard that one might still leave Peking by the Hsi-chih Men; so leaving everything—carts, chairs, and animals—where they were, I started off at dusk on foot with such money and clothing as I had on my person. The road ahead of me was blocked by a dense crowd of refugees. I took the road by the Drum Tower, skirting the lakes to the north of the Imperial City. Towards evening a dreadful thunderstorm came on, so I took refuge for the night with the Ching family. The bombardment had ceased by this time, but the whole northern part of the Imperial City appeared to be in flames, which broke out in fresh places all through the night. At three in the morning we heard that the West Gates were opened, and the City Guards had fled, but that the foreigners had not yet reached that part of the city.

"I had intended to travel by cart, but the disorganised troops had by this time seized every available beast of burden. My second son, however, was luckily able to persuade Captain Liu to fetch one of my carts out from the city, and this was done after several narrow escapes. I had left Peking on foot, but at the bridge close to the North-West Gate I found this cart awaiting me, and with it my second son, who was riding on a mule, and the five servants who remained to us following on foot. When we reached Hai-Tien (a town which lies close to

[1] The North Gate of the Imperial City.

the Summer Palace) every restaurant was closed, but we managed to get a little food, and then hurried on after Their Majesties to Kuan-shih, where we passed the night. Next day, continuing our journey, we learned that Their Majesties were halting at Huai-lai, where we overtook them on the 24th day of the Moon. We expect to reach T'ai-yüan fu about the middle of next week.

"The dangers of our journey are indescribable. Every shop on the road had been plundered by bands of routed troops, who pretend to be part of the Imperial escort. These bandits are ahead of us at every stage of the journey, and they have stripped the country-side bare, so that when the Imperial party reaches any place, and the escort endeavour to commandeer supplies, the distress of the inhabitants and the confusion which ensues are really terrible to witness. The districts through which we have passed are literally devastated."

From Huai-lai the Court moved on to Hsüan-hua fu, a three days' march, and there remained for four days, resting and preparing for the journey into Shansi. The Border Warden at Sha-ho chên had provided Their Majesties with green (official) sedan-chairs, and the usual etiquette of the Court and Grand Council was being gradually restored. Her Majesty's spirits were excellent, and she took a keen interest in everything. At Chi-ming yi, for instance, she was with difficulty dissuaded from stopping to visit a temple on the summit of an adjoining hill, in honour of which shrine the Emperor Kangshi had left a tablet carved with a memorial inscription in verse.

At Hsüan-hua fu there was considerable disorder, but the Court enjoyed increased comforts; thanks to the zeal and energy of the local Magistrate (Ch'en Pen). Here the Old Buddha received Prince Ch'ing's first despatch from Peking, which gave a deplorable account of the situation.

The Court left Hsüan-hua on the 25th August (its numbers being increased by the Emperor's Consort with a few of her personal attendants) and spent the night at a garrison station called Tso-Wei. The deplorable state of the country was reflected in the accommodation they found there; for the guards had fled, and the official quarters had all been plundered and burnt, with the exception of two small rooms, evil-smelling and damp. There was no food

to be had, except bread made of sodden flour. One of the two available rooms was occupied by the Old Buddha, the other by Kuang Hsü and his Consort, while all the officials of the Court, high and low, fared as best they might in the stuffy courtyard. For once the venerable mother's composure deserted her. "This is abominable," she complained; "the place swarms with insects, and I cannot sleep a wink. It is disgraceful that I should have come to such a pass at my time of life. My state is worse even than that of the Emperor Hsüan-Tsung of the T'ang Dynasty, who was forced to fly from his capital, and saw his favourite concubine murdered before his very eyes." An unsubstantiated report that the Allies had plundered her palace treasure-vaults was not calculated to calm Her Majesty, and for a while the suite went in fear of her wrath.

On August 27th the Court crossed the Shansi border, and spent the night at T'ien-chen hsien. The local Magistrate, a Manchu, had committed suicide after hearing of the fall of Mukden and other Manchurian cities; and the town was in a condition of ruinous disorder. Their Majesties supped off a meal hastily provided by the Gaol Warder. But their courage was restored by the arrival of Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan,[1] an official of high intelligence and courage, who greatly pleased the Old Buddha by bringing her a gift of eggs and a girdle and pouch for her pipe and purse.

On the 30th August the Court lay at Ta-t'ung fu, in the Yamên of the local Brigadier-General. They stayed here four days, enjoying the greatly improved accommodation which the General's efforts had secured for them.

On September 4th, they reached the market town of T'ai-yüeh, having travelled thirty-five miles that day, and here again they found damp rooms and poor fare. But Her Majesty's spirits had recovered. On the 16th, while crossing the hill-pass of the "Flighting Geese," Her Majesty ordered a halt in order to enjoy the view. "It reminds me of the Jehol country," she said. Then, turning

[1] At that time Governor-designate of Shensi. He had come north with troops to defend the capital.

to the Emperor, "After all, it's delightful to get away like this from Peking and to see the world, isn't it?" "Under happier circumstances, it would be," replied Kuang Hsü. At this point Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan brought Her Majesty a large bouquet of yellow flowers, a present which touched her deeply: in return she sent him a jar of butter-milk tea.

On the 7th, the only accommodation which the local officials had been able to prepare at Yüan-p'ing was a mud-house belonging to one of the common people, in which, by an oversight, several empty coffins had been left. Ts'en, arriving ahead of the party, was told of this, and galloped to make excuses to Her Majesty and take her orders. Happily, the "Motherly Countenance" was not moved to wrath, and "the divine condescension was manifested." "If the coffins can be moved, move them," she said; "but so long as they are not in the main room, I do not greatly mind their remaining." They were all removed, however, and the Old Buddha was protected from possibly evil influences.

On the 8th September, at Hsin Chou, three Imperial (yellow) chairs had been provided by the local officials, so that Their Majesties' entrance into T'ai-yüan fu, on the 10th, was not unimposing. The Court took up its residence in the Governor's Yamên (that same bloodstained building in which, six weeks before, Yü Hsien had massacred the missionaries.) Yü Hsien, the Governor, met their Imperial Majesties outside the city walls, and knelt by the roadside as the Old Buddha's palanquin came up. She bade her bearers stop, and called to him to approach. When he had done so, she said: "At your farewell audience, in the last Moon of the last year, you assured me that the Boxers were really invulnerable. Alas! You were wrong, and now Peking has fallen! But you did splendidly in carrying out my orders and in ridding Shansi of the whole brood of foreign devils. Everyone speaks well of you for this, and I know, besides, how high is your reputation for good and honest work. Nevertheless, and because the foreign devils are loudly calling for

vengeance upon you, I may have to dismiss you from office, as I had to do with Li Ping-heng: but be not disturbed in mind, for if I do this, it is only to throw dust in the eyes of the barbarians, for our own ends. We must just bide our time, and hope for better days."

Yü Hsien "ko-towed," as in duty bound, nine times, and replied: "Your Majesty's slave caught them as in a net, and allowed neither chicken nor dog to escape: yet am I ready to accept punishment and dismissal from my post. As to the Boxers, they have been defeated because they failed to abide by the laws of the Order, and because they killed and plundered innocent people who were not Christians."

This conversation was clearly heard by several bystanders, one of whom reported it in a letter to Shanghai. When Yü Hsien had finished speaking, the Old Buddha sighed, and told her bearers to proceed. A few days later she issued the first of the Expiatory Decrees by which Yü Hsien and other Boxer leaders were dismissed from office, but not before she had visited the courtyard where the hapless missionaries had met their fate, and cross-examined Yü Hsien on every detail of that butchery. And it is recorded, that, while she listened eagerly to this tale of unspeakable cowardice and cruelty, the Heir Apparent was swaggering noisily up and down the courtyard, brandishing the huge sword given him by Yü Hsien, with which his devil's work had been done. No better example could be cited of this remarkable woman's primitive instincts and elemental passion of vindictiveness.

Once more, during the Court's residence at T'ai-yüan, did the Old Buddha and Yü Hsien meet. At this audience, realising the determination of the foreigners to exact the death penalty in this case, and realising also the Governor's popularity with the inhabitants of T'ai-yüan, she told him, with unmistakable significance, that the price of coffins was rising, a plain but euphemistic hint that he would do well to commit suicide before a worse fate overtook him.

Her Majesty was much gratified at the splendid accom-

modation provided for her at T'ai-yüan, and particularly pleased to see all the gold and silver vessels and utensils that had been made in 1775 for Ch'ien Lung's progress to the sacred shrines of Wu-T'ai shan; they had been polished up for the occasion and made a brave show, so that the "Benevolent Countenance" beamed with delight. "We have nothing like this in Peking," she said.

Jung Lu joined the Court on the day after its arrival at T'ai-yüan, and was most affectionately welcomed by the Old Buddha, to whom he gave a full account of his journey through Chihli and of the widespread devastation wrought by the Boxers.

Tzŭ Hsi asked Jung Lu for his advice as to her future policy. Bluntly, as was his wont, he replied: "Old Buddha, there is only one way. You must behead Prince Tuan and all the rest of the Princes and Ministers who misled you and then you must return to Peking."

An incident, vouched for by a high Manchu official attached to the Court, illustrates the relations at this time existing between the Emperor, the Empress Dowager, and Jung Lu. When the latter reached T'ai-yüan fu, Kuang-Hsü sent a special messenger to summon him. "I am glad you have come at last," said His Majesty. "I desire that you will have Prince Tuan executed without delay."

"How can I do so without the Empress Dowager's orders?" he replied. "The days are past when no other Decree but Your Majesty's was needed." [1]

Jung Lu's position, but for the high favour of the Empress Dowager, would have been full of danger, for he was disliked by reactionaries and reformers alike; surrounded by extremists, his intuitive common sense, his doctrine of the "happy mean" had made him many enemies. Nor could he lay claim to a reputation for that "purest integrity" which he had so greatly admired in his colleague Ch'ung Ch'i. At T'ai-yüan fu, he was openly denounced to the Old Buddha for having connived in the embezzlements of a certain Ch'en Tsê-lin, who had been

[1] An allusion to Kuang-Hsü's order for Jung Lu's summary execution in September 1898.

Photo, Betines, Peking.

MARBLE BRIDGE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE LAKE PALACE.

Photo, Betines. Peking.

IN THE GROUNDS OF THE PALACE IN THE WESTERN PARK.

robbing the Military Treasury on a grand scale. Jung Lu had ordered that his defalcations be made good, but subsequently informed the Throne that the money had been captured by the Allies, and the accusing Censor did not hesitate to say that the price of his conversion (brought to his quarters by the hands of a sergeant named Yao) had been forty thousand taels of silver, twenty pounds of best birds'-nests, and four cases of silk. The Empress Dowager shelved the Memorial, as was her wont, though no doubt she used the information for the ultimate benefit of her privy purse. Jung Lu also received vast sums of money and many valuable presents on his birthday, and at the condolence ceremonies for the death of his wife, so much so that he incurred the fierce jealousy of the chief eunuch Li Lien-ying, who was doing his best at this time to re-feather his own nest, despoiled by the troops of the Allies.

At T'ai-yüan fu, so many officials had joined the Court that intrigues became rife; there was much heartburning as to precedence and status. Those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, the dangers and the hardships of the flight from Peking, claimed special recognition and seniority at the hands of Their Imperial Mistress. Each of these thought they should be privileged above those of equal rank who had only rejoined the Court when all danger was past, and still more so above those who were now hurrying up from the provinces in search of advancement.

The chief topic of discussion at audience, and at meetings of the Grand Council, was the question of the Court's return to Peking, or of the removal of the capital to one of the chief cities of the south or west. Chang Chih-tung had put in a memorial, strongly recommending the city of Tang-Yang in Hupei, on account of its central position. One of the arguments gravely put forward by the "scholarly bungler" for this proposal was, that the characters "Tang-Yang" (which mean "facing south") were in themselves of good augury, and an omen of better days to come, because the Emperor always sits with his

face to the south. Chang's enemies at Court saw in this idea a veiled hint that the Emperor should be restored to power.

But Jung Lu was now *facile princeps* in the Old Buddha's counsels, and at audience his colleagues of the Grand Council (Lu Ch'uan-lin and Wang Wen-shao) followed his lead implicitly. He never ceased to advise the Empress to return forthwith to Peking, and, when at a later date she decided on this step, it was rather because of her faith in his sound judgment than because of the many memorials sent in from other high officials. During the Court's stay at T'ai-yüan fu, argument on this subject was continual, but towards the end of September rumours reached Her Majesty that the Allies were sending a swift punitive expedition to avenge the murdered missionaries; this decided her to leave at once for Hsi-an fu, where she would feel safe from further pursuit. The Court left accordingly on the 30th September; but as the preservation of "face" before the world is a fundamental principle, with Empresses as with slave-girls, in China, her departure was announced in the following brief Edict:—

"As Shansi province is suffering from famine, which makes it very difficult to provide for our needs, and as the absence of telegraphic communication there causes all manner of inconvenient delays, we are compelled to continue our progress westwards to Hsi-an."

The journey into Shensi was made with all due provision for the dignity and comfort of Their Majesties, but the Empress was overcome by grief *en route* at the death of Kang Yi, chief patron of the Boxers, and the most bigoted and violent of all the reactionaries near the Throne. He fell ill at a place called Hou Ma, and died in three days, although the Vice-President of the Board of Censors, Ho Nai-ying, obtained leave to remain behind and nurse him. The Old Buddha was most reluctant to leave the invalid, and showed unusual emotion. After his death she took a kindly interest in his son (who followed the Court to Hsi-an) and would frequently speak to him of his father's patriotism and loyalty.

At Hsi-an fu the Court occupied the Governor's official residence, into which Her Majesty removed after residing for a while in the buildings formerly set apart for the temporary accommodation of the Viceroy of Kansuh and Shensi on visits of inspection. Both Yamêns had been prepared for Their Majesties' use; the walls had been painted Imperial red, and the outer Court surrounded with a palisade, beyond which were the quarters of the Imperial Guards, and the makeshift lodgings of the Metropolitan Boards and the officials of the nine Ministries on palace duty. The arrangements of the Court, though restricted in the matter of space, were on much the same lines as in Peking. The main hall of the "Travelling Palace" was left empty, the side halls being used as ante-chambers for officials awaiting audience. Behind the main hall was a room to which access was given by a door with six panels, two of which were left open, showing the Throne in the centre of the room, upholstered in yellow silk. It was here that Court ceremonies took place. On the left of this room was the apartment where audiences were held daily, and behind this again were the Empress Dowager's bedroom and private sitting-room. The Emperor and his Consort occupied a small apartment communicating with the Old Buddha's bedroom, and to the west of these again were three small rooms, occupied by the Heir Apparent. The chief eunuch occupied the room next to that of the Old Buddha on the east side. The general arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the Court were necessarily of a makeshift and provisional character and the Privy Purse was for a time at a low ebb, so that Her Majesty was much exercised over the receipt and safe custody of the tribute, in money and in kind, which came flowing in from the provinces. So long as the administration of her household was under the supervision of Governor Ts'en, the strictest economy was practised; for instance, the amount allowed by him for the upkeep of Their Majesties' table was two hundred taels (about £25) per day, which, as the Old Buddha remarked on one occasion, was about one-tenth of the ordinary expenditure

under the same heading at Peking. "We are living cheaply now," she said; to which the Governor replied: "The amount could still be reduced with advantage."

Her Majesty's custom, in selecting the menus for the day, was to have a list of about one hundred dishes brought in every evening by the eunuch on duty. After the privations of the flight from Peking, the liberal supply of swallows' nests and *bêche de mer* which came in from the south was very much appreciated, and her rough fare of chickens and eggs gave way to *recherché* menus; but the Emperor, as usual, limited himself to a diet of vegetables. She gave orders that no more than half a dozen dishes should be served at one meal, and she took personal pains with the supply of milk, of which she always consumed a considerable quantity. Six cows were kept in the immediate vicinity of the Imperial apartments, for the feeding of which Her Majesty was charged two hundred taels a month. Her health was good on the whole, but she suffered from indigestion, which she attributed to the change of climate and the fatigues of her journey. For occasional attacks of insomnia she had recourse to massage, in which several of the eunuchs were well skilled. After the Court had settled down at Hsi-an fu, Her Majesty was again persuaded to permit the presentation of plays, which she seemed generally to enjoy as much as those in Peking. But her mind was for ever filled with anxiety as to the progress of the negotiations with the foreign Powers at the capital, and all telegrams received were brought to her at once. The news of the desecration of her Summer Palace had filled her with wrath and distress, especially when, in letters from the eunuch Sun (who had remained in charge at Peking), she learned that her Throne had been thrown into the lake, and that the soldiers had made "lewd and ribald drawings and writings" even on the walls of her bedroom. It was with the greatest relief that she heard of the settlement of the terms of peace, subsequently recorded in the Protocol of 7th of September, and so soon as these terms had been irrevocably arranged, she issued a Decree (June 1901) fixing the date for the Court's return

in September. This Decree, issued in the name of the Emperor, was as follows:

"Our Sacred Mother's advanced age renders it necessary that we should take the greatest care of her health, so that she may attain to peaceful longevity; a long journey in the heat being evidently undesirable, we have fixed on the 19th day of the 7th Moon (1st September) to commence our return journey, and are now preparing to escort Her Majesty, viâ Honan."

One of the most notorious Boxer leaders, namely, Duke Kung, the younger brother of Prince Chuang, had accompanied the Court, with his family, to Hsi-an. The Old Buddha, realising that his presence would undoubtedly compromise her, now decided to send him away. His family fell from one state of misery to another; no assistance was rendered to them by any officials on the journey, and eventually, after much wandering, the Duke was compelled to earn a bare living by serving as a subordinate in a small Yamên, while his wife, who was young and comely, was sold into slavery. It was clear that the Old Buddha had now realised the error of her ways and the folly that had been committed in encouraging the Boxers. After the executions and suicides of the proscribed leaders of the movement she was heard on one occasion to remark: "These Princes and Ministers were wont to bluster and boast, relying upon their new kinship to ourselves, and we foolishly believed them when they assured us that the foreign devils would never get the better of China. In their folly they came within an ace of overthrowing our Dynasty. The only one whose fate I regret is Chao Shu-ch'iao. For him I am truly sorry."

The fate of Prince Chuang's brother showed clearly that both officials and people had realised the genuine change in the Empress Dowager's feelings towards the Boxers, for there was none so poor to do him honour.

Both on the journey to Hsi-an fu and on the return to the capital, Her Majesty displayed the greatest interest in the lives of the peasantry and the condition of the people generally. She subscribed liberally to the famine fund in Shansi, professing the greatest sympathy for the stricken

people. She told the Emperor that she had never appreciated their sufferings in the seclusion of her palace.

During the Court's stay at Hsi-an fu the Emperor came to take more interest in State affairs than he had done at any time since the *coup d'état*, but although the Old Buddha discussed matters with him freely, and took his opinion, he had no real voice in the decision of any important matter. His temper continued to be uncertain and occasionally violent, so that many high officials of the Court preferred always to take their business to the Empress Dowager. One important appointment was made at this time by the Old Buddha at the Emperor's personal request, viz., that of Sun Chia-nai (ex-Imperial tutor) to the Grand Secretariat. This official had resigned office in January 1900 upon the selection of the Heir Apparent, which he regarded as equivalent to the deposition of the Emperor. Subsequently, throughout the Boxer troubles, he had remained in his house at Peking, which was plundered, and he himself would undoubtedly have been killed, but for the protection given him by Jung Lu. At this time also, Lu Ch'uan-lin joined the Grand Council. When the siege of the Legations began, he had left his post as Governor of Kiangsu, and marched north with some three thousand men to defend Peking against the foreigners. Before he reached the capital, however, it had fallen, so that, after disbanding his troops, he went for a few weeks to his native place in Chihli and thence proceeded to join the Court at Ta-T'ung fu, where the Old Buddha received him most cordially. His case is particularly interesting in that he was until his death a member of the Grand Council,[1] and that, like many other high officials at Peking, his ideas of the art of government and the relative position of China in the world, remained exactly as they were before the Boxer movement. His action in proceeding to Peking with his troops from his post in the south is also interesting, as showing the semi-independent position of provincial officials, and the free hand which any man of strong views may claim and enjoy. The Viceroys of Nanking and

[1] Deceased, 26th August 1910.

Wu-ch'ang might dare to oppose the wishes of the Empress Dowager, and to exercise their own judgment as regards declaring war upon foreigners, but it was equally open to any of their subordinates to differ from them, and to take such steps as they might personally consider proper, even to the movement of troops.

An official, one of the many provincial deputies charged with the carrying of tribute to the Court at Hsi-an, returning thence to his post at Soochow, sent to a friend at Peking a detailed description of the life of the Court in exile, from which the following extracts are taken. The document, being at that time confidential and not intended for publication, throws some light on the Court and its doings which is lacking in official documents:—

"The Empress Dowager is still in sole charge of affairs, and controls everything in and around the Court; those who exercise the most influence with her are Jung Lu and Lu Ch'uan-lin. Governor Ts'en, has fallen into disfavour of late. His Majesty's advisers are most anxious that she should return to Peking. She looks very young and well; one would not put her age at more than forty, whereas she is really sixty-four. The Emperor appears to be generally depressed, but he has been putting on flesh lately. The Heir Apparent is fifteen years of age; fat, coarse-featured, and of rude manners. He favours military habits of deportment and dress, and to see him when he goes to the play, wearing a felt cap with gold braid, a leather jerkin, and a red military overcoat, one would take him for a prize-fighter. He knows all the young actors and rowdies, and associates generally with the very lowest classes. He is a good rider, however, and a very fair musician. If, at the play-houses, the music goes wrong, he will frequently get up in his place and rebuke the performer, and at times he even jumps on to the stage, possesses himself of the instrument, and plays the piece himself. All this brings the boy into disrepute with respectable people, and some of his pranks have come to the ears of the Old Buddha, who they say has had him severely whipped. His last offence was to commence an intrigue with one of the ladies-in-waiting on Her Majesty, for which he got into serious trouble. He is much in the company of Li Lien-ying (the chief eunuch), who leads him into the wildest dissipation.[1] My friend Kao, speaking of him the other day, wittily said, that 'from being an expectant Emperor, he would soon become a deposed Heir Apparent'; which is quite true, for he never reads,

[1] As he had done for Tzŭ Hsi's son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih.

all his tastes are vicious, and his manners rude and overbearing. To give you an instance of his doings: on the 18th of the 10th Moon, accompanied by his brother and by his uncle, the Boxer Duke Lan, and followed by a crowd of eunuchs, he got mixed up in a fight with some Kansu braves at a theatre in the Temple of the City God. The eunuchs got the worst of it, and some minor officials who were in the audience were mauled by the crowd. The trouble arose, in the first instance, because of the eunuchs attempting to claim the best seats in the house, and the sequel shows to what lengths of villainy these fellows will descend, and how great is their influence with the highest officials. The eunuchs were afraid to seek revenge on the Kansu troops direct, but they attained their end by denouncing the manager of the theatre to Governor Ts'en, and by inducing him to close every theatre in Hsi-an. Besides which, the theatre manager was put in a wooden collar, and thus ignominiously paraded through the streets of the city. The Governor was induced to take this action on the ground that Her Majesty, sore distressed at the famine in Shansi and the calamities which have overtaken China, was offended at these exhibitions of unseemly gaiety; and the proclamation which closed the play-houses, ordered also that restaurants and other places of public entertainment should suspend business. Everybody in the city knew that this was the work of the eunuchs. Eventually Chi Lu, Chamberlain of the Household, was able to induce the chief eunuch to ask the Old Buddha to give orders that the theatres be reopened. This was accordingly done, but of course the real reason was not given, and the Proclamation stated that, since the recent fall of snow justified hopes of a prosperous year and good harvests, as a mark of the people's gratitude to Providence, the theatres would be reopened as usual, 'but no more disturbances must occur.'

* * * * *

"It would seem that the Old Buddha still cherishes hopes of defeating the foreigners, for she is particularly delighted by a Memorial which has been sent in lately by Hsia Chen-wu, in which he recommends a certain aboriginal tribesman ('Man-tzu') as a man of remarkable strategic ability. He offers to lose his own head and those of all his family, should this Heaven-sent warrior fail to defeat all the troops of the Allies in one final engagement, and he begs that the Emperor may permit this man to display his powers and thus save the Empire."

XVI

THE OLD BUDDHA PENITENT

When the wrath of the Powers had been appeased by the death and banishment of the leading Boxers, and when the Empress Dowager had come to realise that her future policy must be one of conciliation and reform, she proceeded first of all to adjust the annals of her reign for the benefit of posterity, in the following remarkable Edict (13th February 1901):—

"In the summer of last year, the Boxers, after bringing about a state of war, took possession of our Capital and dominated the very Throne itself. The Decrees issued at that time were the work of wicked Princes and Ministers of State, who, taking advantage of the chaotic condition of affairs, did not hesitate to issue documents under the Imperial seal, which were quite contrary to our wishes. We have on more than one previous occasion hinted indirectly at the extraordinary difficulty of the position in which we were placed, and which left us no alternative but to act as we did. Our officials and subjects should have no difficulty in reading between the lines and appreciating our meaning.

"We have now punished all the guilty, and we hereby order that the Grand Secretariat shall submit for our perusal all Decrees issued between the 24th day of the 5th Moon and the 20th day of the 7th Moon (20th June to 14th August), so that all spurious or illegal documents may be withdrawn and cancelled. Thus shall historical accuracy be attained and our Imperial utterances receive the respect to which they are properly entitled."

Having thus secured the respect of posterity, Tzŭ Hsi proceeded to make the *amende honorable* (with due regard to the Imperial "face"), for so many of her sins as she was prepared to admit. In another Decree, in the name of the Emperor, which gives a Münchhausen account of the Throne's part and lot in the crisis of 1900, and a pathetic description of her own and the Emperor's suffer-

ings during the flight, she makes solemn confession of error and promise of reform. As an example of the manner in which history is made in China, this Edict is of permanent interest and value, but it is too long for reproduction.

It was issued in February, coincidently with Her Majesty's acceptance of the conditions imposed by the Powers in the peace negotiations at Peking. From that date until, in June, the terms of the Protocol were definitely settled by the plenipotentiaries, her attitude continued to be one of nervous apprehension, while the discomfort of life at Hsi-an, as well as the advice repeatedly given her by Jung Lu and the provincial Viceroys, combined to make her look forward with impatience to the day when she might set out for her capital.

There remained only one source of difficulty, namely, the presence of Prince Tuan's son, the Heir Apparent, at her Court. Tzŭ Hsi was well aware that she could hardly look for cordial relations with the representatives of the Powers at Peking, or for sympathy abroad, so long as this son of the Boxer chief remained heir to the Throne. It would clearly be impossible, in the event of his becoming Emperor, for him to consent to his father remaining under sentence of banishment, and equally impossible to expect the Powers to consent to Prince Tuan's rehabilitation and return. Yet the youth had been duly and solemnly appointed to succeed to the Throne, a thing not lightly to be set aside. Once again the Old Buddha showed that the sacred laws of succession were less than a strong woman's will.

Politics apart, it was common knowledge that Tzŭ Hsi had for some time repented of her choice of Prince Tuan's ill-mannered, uncouth son as Heir Apparent. More than once had she been brought to shame by his wild, and sometimes disgraceful, conduct. Even in her presence, the lad paid little heed to the formalities of Court etiquette, and none at all to the dignity of his own rank and future position. Tzŭ Hsi was therefore probably not sorry of the excuse for deposing him from that high estate. In the Decree cancelling his title to the Throne, she observed

that his father, Prince Tuan, had brought the Empire to the verge of ruin, and that the guilt which he had thus incurred towards his august ancestors could never be wiped out. In order to save the "face" of the Heir Apparent and her own, in a difficult position, the Edict describes him as being fully convinced of the impossibility of his succeeding to the Throne under existing conditions, and that he himself had therefore petitioned Her Majesty to cancel her previous decision. In granting this request and directing him to remove himself forthwith from the palace precincts, the Empress conferred upon him the rank of an Imperial Duke of the lowest grade, excusing him at the same time from performance of any official duties in that capacity. By this decision she meant to mark the contempt into which the Heir Apparent had fallen, for the rank thus granted him was a low one, and, without any official duties or salary, he was condemned to a life of poverty and obscurity. This fallen Heir to the Dragon Throne is a well-known figure to-day in the lowest haunts of the Chinese city at Peking: a drunkard and disreputable character, living the life of a gambler, notorious only as a swashbuckler of romantic past and picturesque type,—one who, but for adverse fate and the accursed foreigner, would have been Emperor of China.

Having deposed him, the Empress let it be known that the selection of an heir to the disconsolate shade of T'ung-Chih would be postponed "until a suitable candidate should be found," an intimation generally understood to mean that the vital question of providing an heir in legitimate and proper succession to the Throne could not well be determined until China's foreign relations, as well as her internal affairs, had been placed upon a basis of greater security. It is curious to note how, in all such utterances, it appears to have been tacitly understood that the Emperor Kuang Hsü was a "bad life."

Thus, in exile, the Old Buddha wore philosophically the white sheet of penance and burned the candle of expiation, preparatory to re-entering anon upon a new lease of power in that Peking where, as she well knew, the memory of the

foreigner is short and his patience long. In June 1901 the terms of peace were settled; on the 7th September the Peace Protocol was solemnly signed by the representatives of all the Powers, that "monument of collective inefficiency" which was to sow the seeds of trouble to last for many years to come. At Hsi-an "in the profound seclusion of the palace" she knew remorse, not unstimulated by fear; on the return journey to her capital (from 20th October 1901 to 6th January 1902), while preparing her arts and graces to captivate the barbarian, she was still a victim to doubt and apprehension. Meanwhile, at Peking, the mandarin world, reassured by the attitude of the peace negotiators and their terms, was fast shedding its garments of fear and peacocking as of yore, in renewed assurance of its own indisputable superiority. Evidence of this spirit was to be met with on all sides, gradually coming to its fine flower in the subsequent negotiations for the revision of the commercial Treaties, and bringing home once more, to those who study these things, the unalterable truth of the discovery made years ago by one of the earliest British representatives in China, namely, that "this people yields nothing to reason and everything to fear."

One of the most remarkable instances of this revival of the mandarin's traditional arrogance of superiority occurred, significantly enough, in connection with the penitential mission of the Emperor's brother, Prince Ch'un (now Regent), to Berlin, an episode which threatened for a moment to lead to a rupture between Germany and China. By Article 1 of the Peace Protocol, Prince Ch'un had been specially designated for this mission to convey in person to the German Emperor the regrets of the Chinese Government for the murder of Baron von Ketteler. He left Peking for the purpose on the 12th July 1901, with definite instructions as to the manner in which the Chinese Government's regrets were to be expressed. The German Emperor's proposals as to the form of ceremony to be followed in this matter were regarded by Prince Ch'un as incompatible with his instructions, and it will be remembered that, after some hesitation on the part of the German

Government, the Chinese policy of passive resistance eventually carried the day. The following telegraphic correspondence on the subject is of permanent interest. Prince Ch'un (whose personal name is Tsai Feng) telegraphed from Germany on the 26th September to the Peace Plenipotentiaries, Prince Ch'ing and Li Hung-chang, as follows:—

"I have duly received the Grand Council's message, and note that I am commanded to act as circumstances may require, and that a middle course is suggested as expedient. I fully appreciate the intelligent caution of your policy, and fortunately had already taken steps to act in the sense indicated. On the 14th of this Moon the German Emperor had given orders to stop preparations for the ceremony, but as I noticed that the Royal train had not been withdrawn nor had his aide-de-camp left my suite, I inferred that there was a possibility of his yielding the points in dispute. Accordingly, after a long discussion of the situation with Yin Ch'ang, I directed him to write in German to *Jeng-yintai* [1] requesting his friendly intervention at the Foreign Office with a definite explanation that China could not possibly agree that the mission should be received kneeling, that Germany had nothing to gain on insisting upon such a procedure, and that the only result of a fiasco would be to make both countries appear extremely ridiculous. I therefore begged that the Emperor should accede to my personal appeal and waive the point. At the same time I requested the German gentleman who acts as Chinese Consul for Bavaria to address the Foreign Office to the same effect, and with a request that we might enter upon discussion of the point. Four days later I directed Lü Hai-huan to return to his post at Berlin to make such arrangements as might be possible, and on the following day I telegraphed to him a summary of the Grand Council's views on the matter. In the afternoon of the 20th I received the Consul for Bavaria, who informed me that he had received a telegram from the Foreign Office inquiring when I proposed to start for Berlin, and hoping that I would do so speedily, as the Emperor had now consented to waive the question of our kneeling, but required that only Yin Ch'ang should accompany me when presenting the letter of regret, the remainder of my suite to remain in another place.

"The same evening I received a message from Lü Hai-huan, stating that the Emperor would undoubtedly receive me, and that, since all other difficult questions had been settled,

[1] The Chinese rendering of a German name.

His Majesty wished to leave for the country in a few days. Under these circumstances I did not consider it advisable to insist too strictly on minor details of etiquette, being pressed for time, and I therefore requested the German Emperor's Chamberlain to have a special train prepared for my journey. We reached Potsdam at 3 P.M. on the 21st[1]; I was met by a General sent by the Emperor with his state carriage. Myself and my suite were lodged in the palace, where every attention was shown to us, and it was arranged that I should fulfil my mission on the following day, after depositing a wreath on the grave of the late Empress. On the morning of the following day I visited her tomb, and at noon the state carriage came to take me to the New Palace, where, after being ushered into the Emperor's presence, I read aloud Their Majesties' complimentary letter. The members of my suite were awaiting in an adjoining apartment. After the ceremony I was escorted back to my residence, and at 2 P.M. the Emperor came to call upon me. He was very cordial and remained talking with me for a long time. By his orders a steam launch was provided for me, in which I visited the Lake and Peacock Island; on the following day I saw a review of the troops, and was presented to the Empress. The Emperor begged me to remain longer in Berlin, suggesting that I should visit the arsenals and inspect the fleet under Prince Henry at Stettin. I could scarcely decline these polite attentions, and after visiting the Empress I took lodging in an hotel at Berlin. Thanks to the glorious prestige of our Empire, matters have thus been satisfactorily settled, and the knowledge that my mission has been satisfactorily carried out will, I hope, bring comfort to Their Imperial Majesties in their anxiety. I beg that you will memorialise the Throne accordingly.—TSAI FENG."

The Empress Dowager was pleased to express her approval of the result of this mission, which in the eyes of the Chinese Government was undoubtedly one of those diplomatic triumphs which China appears to attain most easily when her material resources have completely failed. Reading the above despatch, it is difficult to realise that the Prince's mission had for its object the expiation of a brutal murder committed, with the full approval of the Chinese Government and Court, on the representative of a friendly nation. The opinion was commonly held by the Legations at Peking, that the Regent learned much from that penitential mission to the German capital. In 1910

[1] This is the Chinese date; the day of the audience was the 4th September.

his brothers were engaged on missions ostensibly intended to acquire knowledge for the sorely needed reorganisation of China's army and navy, missions which were received with royal honours by almost every civilised Power; but there were many close observers of the changing conditions at Peking who saw in these missions merely a repetition of farces that had often been played before, and an attempt to gain prestige in the eyes of the Chinese people for the Regent's family and the Court, rather than any definite intention or desire to reform the official system.

XVII

THE RETURN OF THE COURT TO PEKING

The state of mind of the Empress Dowager during the flight from the capital, and subsequently while the Court remained in exile at Hsi-an, was marked by that same quality of indecision and vacillating impulse which had characterised her actions throughout the Boxer crisis and the siege of Peking. This may be ascribed partly to her advancing age and partly to the conflicting influences of astrologers and fortune-tellers, to whose advice she attached the greatest importance in all times of peril. We have dealt in another place with her marked susceptibility to omens and superstitious beliefs; its effect is most noticeable, however, at this stage of her life, and was conspicuous in matters of small detail throughout the return journey to Peking.

The influence of Jung Lu at Hsi-an, and that of Li Hung-chang at Peking, had been systematically exercised to induce Her Majesty to return to the capital; but until the Peace Protocol conditions had been definitely arranged, and until she had been persuaded to decree adequate punishment upon the Boxer leaders, the predominant feeling in her mind was evidently one of suspicion and fear, as was shown when she ordered the hurried flight from T'ai-yüan fu to Hsi-an. The influence of Li Hung-chang, who, from the outset, had realised the folly committed by the Chinese Government in approving the attack upon the Legations, was exercised to create in the mind of Her Majesty a clearer sense of the folly of that policy. At the height of the crisis (21st July 1900), realising that the foreign forces brought to bear upon China were steadily defeating both Boxers and Imperial troops, she appointed Li Hung-chang to be Viceroy of Chihli, and directed that

His Highness Prince Tsai Hsün.

Brother of the late Emperor and Present Regent—recently head of the Naval Mission to Europe and America.

he should proceed from Canton with all haste, there being urgent need of the services of a diplomat versed in foreign affairs. Her Majesty went so far as to suggest that he should proceed from Shanghai to Tientsin in a Russian vessel which "he might borrow for the purpose." Li Hung-chang's reply, telegraphed to Yüan Shih-k'ai for transmission to the Throne, while outwardly respectful, clearly implies that Her Majesty has been to blame for the disasters then occurring. "I am sincerely grateful," he says, "for Your Majesty's gratifying confidence in me, but cannot help recalling to mind the folly which has now suddenly destroyed that structure of reformed administration which, during my twenty years' term of office as Viceroy of Chihli, I was able to build up not unsuccessfully. I fear it will not be possible for me to resume the duties of this difficult post at a time of crisis like the present, destitute as I am of all proper and material resources." He proceeds even to criticise Her Majesty's suggestion as to his journey, observing that "Russia possesses no vessel at Shanghai, and would certainly refuse to lend if she had one, in view of the state of war now existing." Finally, he excuses himself for deferring his departure, on the ground that the British Minister had requested him not to leave until the foreign Ministers had been safely escorted from Peking to Tientsin. "I do not know," says he, "if any such arrangements for safely escorting them can be made," and therefore concludes by asking Yüan to inform the Throne that he will start northwards, journeying by land, "as soon as his health permits it." To this plain-spoken message from the great Viceroy, Tzŭ Hsi replied in two lines of equally characteristic directness: "Li Hung-chang is to obey our earlier Decree, and to make all haste northwards. The crisis is serious. Let him make no further excuses for delay."

In spite of these peremptory orders, Li Hung-chang, who had a very definite conception of his own predicament, remained at Shanghai, ostensibly negotiating, but in reality waiting, to see what would be the outcome of the siege of the Legations. He was interviewed by *The*

Times correspondent at Shanghai on the 23rd of July, and then stated that he would not proceed to his post in the north until convinced by clear proofs that the Empress Dowager had seen the folly of her ways, and was prepared to adopt a conciliatory policy towards the outraged foreign Powers. At the end of July, when it became clear to him that the Court had determined on flight, he forwarded by special courier a very remarkable memorial, in which he called the Throne to task in the plainest possible terms, and urged an immediate change of policy. This memorial reached the Empress before her departure from Peking, and its plain-spoken advice was not without effect on the Empress Dowager. The Decrees issued by her in the name of the Emperor from Huai-lai on the 19th and 20th of August are the first indications given to the outside world that she had definitely decided on a policy of conciliation so as to render possible her eventual return to the capital—an event which, as she foresaw, would probably be facilitated by the inevitable differences and jealousies already existing among the Allies.

In the Edict of the 19th of August, after explaining that the whole Boxer crisis and the attack on the Legations was the result of differences between Christian and non-Christian Chinese, she querulously complains that the foreign Powers, although doubtless well meaning in their efforts to "exterminate the rebels," are behaving in a manner which suggests aggressive designs towards China, and which shows a lamentable disregard of proper procedure and friendliness. She naïvely observes that the Chinese Government had been at the greatest pains to protect the lives and property of foreigners in Peking, in spite of many difficulties, and expresses much surprise at such an evil return being made for her invariable kindness and courtesy. If it were not for the unbounded capacity of foreign diplomats, fully proved in the past, in the matter of credulity where Chinese statecraft is concerned, it would be difficult to regard utterances like these as the work of an intelligent ruler. But Tzŭ Hsi was, as usual, justified, for at the very time when these Decrees were issued, Russia

was already using very similar arguments, and making excuses for the Chinese government, in pursuance of her own policy at Peking.

In the conclusion of the Decree above referred to, Her Majesty orders Jung Lu, Hsü T'ung and Ch'ung Ch'i to remain in Peking to act as peace negotiators, but she admits that, in dealing with foreigners supported by troops and flushed with success, it may be difficult for them at the outset to determine on a satisfactory line of procedure. She leaves it to these plenipotentiaries, therefore, to determine whether the best course would be to telegraph to the respective Foreign Offices of the countries concerned, or to consult with the Consuls-General at Shanghai (*sic*), with a view to obtaining friendly intervention! It could not escape so shrewd a person as Tzŭ Hsi that the atmosphere of Peking at this juncture was not likely to be favourable to her purposes, and that it would be easier to hoodwink the Foreign Offices and the Consuls at Shanghai than those who had just been through the siege.

A Decree of the following day, also in the name of the Emperor, is couched in a very different strain—a pathetic admission of the Throne's guilt, a plea for the sympathy of his people, and an exhortation to return to ways of wisdom. "Cleanse your hearts, and remove all doubt and suspicion from your minds, so as to assist us, the Emperor, in our shortcomings. We have been utterly unworthy, but the time is at hand when it shall be for us to prove that Heaven has not left us without sense of our errors and deep remorse." The whole document reads with an unusual ring of sincerity, accepting, in the name of the Emperor, full blame for all the disasters which had overtaken the country, while reminding the official class that the first cause of these calamities dates back to the time when they learned and adopted habits of inveterate sloth and luxury. From depths of contrition, the Edict admits fully the Throne's responsibility: "We, the Lord of this Empire, have failed utterly in warding off calamities from our people, and we should not hesitate for one moment to commit suicide, in order to placate our tutelary deities

and the gods of the soil, but we cannot forget that duty of filial piety and service which we owe to our sacred and aged mother, the Empress Dowager."

The policy of reform is now clearly enunciated and outlined as an essential condition of the future government of the Empire. Provincial and metropolitan officials are ordered to proceed at once to join the Court, in order that the reform programme may be speedily initiated; the Yangtsze Viceroys are thanked for preserving order in accordance with "treaty stipulations," and Chinese converts to Christianity are once more assured of the Throne's protection and good-will.

These utterances of the Throne, which lost nothing in their presentation to the respective Powers by Prince Ch'ing and his colleagues, soon produced the desired effect, and reassured the Throne and its advisers as to their personal safety. Accordingly, early in September, we find all the Viceroys and high officials of the Provinces uniting in a Memorial, whereby the Court is urged to return at once to the capital, advice which would never have been given had there been any question of violent measures being taken by the Allies against the Empress Dowager. At this time the question of the future location of the Chinese capital was being widely discussed at Court, and there was much conflicting advice on the subject. The Viceroys' memorial was drafted by Yüan Shih-k'ai and forwarded by him to Liu K'un-yi, at Nanking, for transmission; it definitely blames the Boxers and their leaders for the ruin which had come upon China, and rejoices at the thought that "the perplexities which embarrassed Your Majesties in the past have now given place to a clearer understanding of the situation." Noting the possibility of the Court's leaving T'ai-yuan fu and making "a further progress" westwards to Hsi-an, the memorialists deplored the idea and proceeded to show that such a step would be unwise as well as inconvenient.

After referring to the fact that the cradle of the Dynasty and the tombs of its ancestors are situated near Peking, and that it is geographically best fitted to be the centre of

Government, the memorialists reminded the Throne that the foreign Powers had promised to vacate Peking, and to refrain from annexing any territory if the Court will return. These ends, they said, would not be attained should the Court persist in its intention to proceed further westwards, since it was now the desire of the foreign Ministers that China's rulers should return to Peking. In the event of a permanent occupation of Peking by the Allies, the loss of Manchuria would be inevitable. The memorialists predicted partition and many other disasters, including financial distress, and the impossibility of furnishing the Throne with supplies at Hsi-an or any other remote corner of the Empire. If the Court's decision to proceed to Hsi-an was irrevocable, at least a Decree should be issued, stating that its sojourn there would be a brief one, and that the Court would return to Peking upon the complete restoration of peaceful conditions. "The continued existence of the Empire must depend upon the Throne's decision upon this matter." The Memorial concluded by imploring Their Majesties to authorise Prince Ch'ing to inform the foreign Ministers that the withdrawal of the allied armies would be followed by a definite announcement as to the Court's return.

In a further memorial from the Viceroys and Governors, it was stated that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had suggested to the Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg, that the location of the capital at Hsi-an would certainly prove undesirable, in view of the poverty-stricken condition of the province, and that Their Majesties would no doubt, therefore, proceed to Lan-chou fu, in Kansu.

Before coming to a decision, however, Tzŭ Hsi required to be fully assured that the foreign Powers would not insist on her abdicating the supreme power as one of the conditions of peace. Convinced on that point, the hesitation which she had previously shown in regard to returning to Peking dropped from her like a garment. It had been freely predicted by conservative officials and the *literati* that the Old Buddha would never again wish to see her desecrated capital or to visit the polluted shrines of her

ancestors. In spite of her superstitious nature, however, she was far too level-headed and far-seeing a woman to attach supreme importance to sentimental considerations, or to allow them to weigh heavily in the balance when the question of her own rulership was at stake. The hesitation which she had shown and the attention which she had paid to the advice of those who, like Chang Chih-tung, desired her to establish a new capital in Central China, were primarily a question of "face." She would only return to Peking if guaranteed the full dignity and power of her former position. But as the peace negotiations proceeded, and as it became clear to her that along the well-worn path of international jealousies she might return unpunished, and even welcomed, to Peking, she proceeded to make preparations for an early return. Fully informed each day by Prince Ch'ing of the progress which her plenipotentiaries were making towards the completion of the Peace Protocol, and overjoyed at its terms, she waited only until the condition of the roads, always more or less impassable after the summer rains, had sufficiently improved to permit of comfortable travelling. During the delay necessitated by the collecting and packing of the enormous quantity of "tribute" collected by Her Majesty and the Court during their stay at Hsi-an, she received definite confirmation of the good news that her treasure vaults in the capital had not been plundered by the foreign troops—good news which increased her anxiety to return as quickly as possible to superintend its removal before any pilfering by the eunuchs should take place.

It was on the 24th day of the 8th Moon (20th October, 1901) that the long procession started from Her Majesty's temporary residence in the Governor's Yamên; followed by an enormous retinue, she commenced her journey by sacrificing to the God of War, the guardian spirit of her Dynasty (and, it may be added, patron of the Boxers), at a small temple outside the city gates. From this onward the Court advanced northward by easy stages of about twenty-five miles a day, resting first at Ho-nan fu; thence on to K'ai-fêng, where her sixty-sixth birthday was celebrated

and where she remained for some weeks. The travelling lodges and other arrangements for her comfort and convenience along the whole line of her route were in striking contrast to the squalor and privation which the Court had endured in the flight from Peking.

It was during her stay at K'ai-fêng that the Peace Protocol was signed at Peking. It was also before her departure from that city, at the end of the 9th Moon, that Li Hung-chang died. His knowledge of foreign affairs and remarkable ability in negotiations had been of the greatest service to his Imperial mistress, and there is no doubt that the liberal terms granted to China by the victorious Allies were very largely due to his efforts. Her Majesty, while fully appreciating his ability, had never treated him with marked favour, and had always refused to appoint him to the Grand Council, giving as her excuse that she could not understand his dialect. Upon his death, however, she conferred upon him an honour which had never before been granted to any Chinese subject under the Dynasty, namely, that of having a shrine built to his memory at the capital itself, in addition to those erected in the provinces where he had borne office.

It was significant of her impartial and intelligent rulership that, although she had blamed him as originally responsible for the Japanese War and its disastrous results, she had never approved of the Emperor's hasty and vindictive action in removing him from the Viceroyalty of Chihli. Upon the signing of the Peace Protocol she conferred additional posthumous honours upon him, taking occasion at the same time, in an Imperial Decree, to congratulate and thank Prince Ch'ing, Yüan Shih-k'ai and others, who assisted in bringing about the settlement of peace terms. In particular she praised the loyalty of Jung Lu, "who had earnestly advised the annihilation of the Boxers, and who, in addition to other meritorious services on the Grand Council, had been chiefly instrumental in protecting the Legations."

After a series of magnificent theatrical entertainments in honour of her birthday, the Court left K'ai-fêng and

continued its journey to the capital. On the eve of her departure Her Majesty took occasion sternly and publicly to rebuke the Manchu Prefect, Wen T'i,[1] who had dared to advise her against returning to the capital, and to predict that the treacherous foreigners would certainly seize her sacred person—a useful piece of play to the gallery.

At the crossing of the Yellow River, which took place in beautiful weather, she sacrificed to the River God, in expiation and thanksgiving. The local officials had constructed a magnificent barge, in the form of a dragon, upon which she and the ladies of the Court crossed the stream. It was noticed from this point onwards that wherever foreigners happened to be amongst the spectators of the Imperial *cortège,* she made a point of showing them particular attention and civility, and before her arrival in Peking she issued a Decree commanding that Europeans should not be prevented from watching the procession upon her arrival, and this in spite of the fact that, in accordance with the usual custom, the Legations had issued notices forbidding their nationals to appear in the streets during the passage of the Imperial *cortège.* Everything indicated, in fact, that Her Majesty now desired to conciliate the European Powers by all possible means, and if it be borne in mind that it was part of her deliberate policy thus to ingratiate herself with foreigners as a means of furthering her own future policy, her actions lose nothing of interest, while they gain something from the humorous point of view.

On crossing the borders of the Province of Chihli, Her Majesty issued a Decree, couched in almost effusive terms of friendliness, proclaiming that the Emperor would receive the foreign Ministers in audience immediately upon his return to the palace, and that the reception would take place in the central Throne Hall of the sacred enclosure. Chinese, reading this Decree, and ignorant of the terms of the Peace Protocol which provided for this particular concession to the barbarian, would naturally regard it as a spontaneous mark of the Imperial clemency and goodwill. In the same Edict Her Majesty proclaimed her intention of

[1] Wen T'i had been a censor in 1898, but was cashiered by the Emperor or being reactionary. Tzŭ Hsi restored him to favour after the *coup d'état.*

receiving the Ministers' wives in person, intimating that she cherished most pleasant memories of past friendly intercourse with them. Here, again, we note fulfilment of a plan, deliberately conceived and formed upon the best classical models, "for dealing with strong and savage people."

At noon on the 6th of January 1902 the Imperial party arrived by special train at the temporary station which had been erected close to the southern walls of Peking, and adjoining the old terminus at Ma-chia p'u. Large pavilions, handsomely decorated, had been erected near the station, in which the Old Buddha and the Emperor were to be received; they were furnished with a throne of gold lacquer, *cloisonné* altar vessels and many valuable pieces of porcelain. Several hundreds of the highest metropolitan officials were in attendance, and a special place had been provided for foreigners. As the long train of over thirty carriages drew up at the station, the keen face of the Old Buddha was seen anxiously scanning her surroundings from one of the windows of her car. With her were the young Empress and the Princess Imperial, while the chief eunuch, Li Lien-ying, was in attendance. Recognising Her Majesty, every official fell upon his knees, whilst Chi Lu, chief officer of the Household, officiously shouted to the foreigners to remove their hats (which they had already done). The first to emerge from the train was the chief eunuch, who proceeded forthwith to check the long list of provincial tribute and treasure, mountainous loads of baggage which had travelled with the Court from the start and under Her Majesty's close personal supervision. After the eunuch came the Emperor, evidently extremely nervous, who, at a sign from Her Majesty, hurried into his sedan-chair and was swiftly borne away, without a word or a sign of recognition to any of the officials in attendance. After his departure, the Empress came out and stood upon the platform at the end of her carriage. "Quite a number of foreigners are here, I see," she was heard to observe. She saluted them in accordance with the etiquette observed by Chinese women—bowing and raising her crossed hands. Prince Ch'ing then advanced to greet Her Majesty, and

with him Wang Wen-shao (who had succeeded Li Hung-chang as Peace Plenipotentiary). They invited Her Majesty to enter her chair: "There is no hurry," she replied. She stood for some five minutes in full view of the crowd, talking energetically with the bystanders, and looking extremely well and youthful for her age, until the chief eunuch returned and handed her the list of baggage and treasure, which she scanned with close attention and then returned to him with an expression of satisfaction.

After this, at the request of the Viceroy of Chihli (Yüan Shih-k'ai), the foreign manager and engineer of the railway were presented to her, and received her thanks for the satisfactory arrangements made throughout the journey. She then entered her chair, a larger and finer conveyance than that supplied to the Emperor, and was borne away towards the palace; by her side ran one of her favourite eunuchs repeatedly calling Her Majesty's attention to objects of interest. Whenever foreigners were in sight he would inform Her Majesty of the fact, and by one he was heard distinctly to say: "Look! Old Buddha, look quickly at that foreign devil," whereupon the Empress smiled and bowed most affably. Passing through the southern gate of the Chinese city, her bearers carried her straight to the large *enceinte* of the Tartar city wall at the Ch'ien-mên, where stands the shrine dedicated to the tutelary God of the Manchus. Here crowds of foreigners were in waiting on the wall. Looking down on the courtyard towards the shrine, they saw the Old Buddha leave her chair and fall upon her knees to burn incense before the image of the God of War, whilst several Taoist priests chanted the ritual. Rising she next looked up towards the foreigners, smiling and bowing, before she was carried away through the gate into the precincts of the Forbidden City. No sooner had she reached the inner palace (the Ning Shou kung) at about 2 P.M., than she commanded the eunuchs to commence digging up the treasure which had been buried there at the time of her flight; she was gratified beyond measure to find that it had indeed remained untouched.

Next, with an eye not only upon her future relations with foreigners but also on public opinion throughout the Empire, she issued a Decree conferring posthumous honours on the Pearl Concubine, who, as it will be remembered, was thrown down a well by her orders on the morning of the Court's flight from the palace. In this Decree Her Majesty praises the virtue and admirable courage of the dead woman, which "led her virtuously to commit suicide when unable to catch up the Court on its departure," unwilling as she was to witness the destruction and pollution of the ancestral shrines. Her trustworthy conduct was therefore rewarded by the granting of a posthumous title and by promotion of one step in rank in the Imperial harem. The Decree was generally regarded as fulfilling all reasonable requirements of atonement towards the deceased, for in China the dead yet live and move in a shadowy, but none the less real, hierarchy. Alive, a Pearl Concubine more or less counted for little when weighed against the needs of the Old Buddha's policies; once dead, however, her spirit must needs be conciliated and compensated.

Many Europeans who had witnessed the arrival of the Empress Dowager, remained at the railway station to see the unloading of her long baggage train, a most interesting and instructive sight. First were discharged the yellow chairs of the young Empress and the Princess Imperial, and four green chairs with yellow borders for the principal concubines; the other ladies of the Court followed in official carts, two to each vehicle. There were about ninety of them altogether, and the arrangements for their conveyance were accompanied by no little noise and confusion, the loquacity of some of the elder ladies being most noticeable. After their departure the attention of the eunuchs and minor officials was directed to the huge pile of the Empress Dowager's personal baggage, which included her cooking utensils and household articles in daily use. This operation, as well as the removal of a very large quantity of bullion (every case of which was marked with the name of the province or city that had sent it as tribute), was for a

time superintended by the Grand Council. But as the work was enough to last for several hours, it was not long before, led by Jung Lu, they entered their chairs and left for the City. It was noticed that Jung Lu seemed very infirm, and was supported as he walked by two attendants of almost gigantic stature.

Within a week or so of the Court's return, the representatives of the foreign Powers were duly received in audience under the conditions named in the Peace Protocol. It was observed that the Old Buddha assumed, as of old, the highest seat on the Throne dais, the Emperor occupying a lower and almost insignificant position. At the subsequent reception of the Minister's wives, in the Pavilion of Tranquil Longevity, the wife of the *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps presented an address to "welcome Her Imperial Majesty back to her beautiful capital." The document was most cordially, almost effusively, worded, and showed that the astute and carefully pre-arranged measures taken by the Empress to conciliate the foreign Powers by adroit flattery and "allurements" had already attained their desired effect. Already the horrors of the siege, the insults and the arrogance of 1900, were forgotten; already the representatives of the Powers were prepared, as of old, to vie with each other in attempts to purchase Chinese favour by working each against the other.

In receiving the address of the ladies of the Diplomatic Body, Her Majesty created a marked impression by the emotion with which she referred to her affectionate regard for Europeans in general and her visitors in particular. With every evidence of complete sincerity she explained that a "revolution in the palace" had compelled her to flee from Peking; she deeply regretted the inconvenience and hardships to which her good friends of the Foreign Legations had been so unfortunately subjected, and she hoped for a renewal of the old cordial relations. The foreign ladies left the audience highly satisfied with the Empress Dowager for her condescension, and with themselves at being placed in a position to display such magnanimity. This audience was the first of many similar

occasions, and reference to the numerous works in which the social side of Her Majesty's subsequent relations with Europeans have been described will show that the Old Buddha had not greatly erred when she assured Jung Lu of the value of ancient classical methods in dealing with barbarians, and promised him that all would readily be forgiven and forgotten in the tactful exercise of condescending courtesies.

Life settled down then into the old grooves, and all went on as before in the capital of China, the garrisons of the Allies soon becoming a familiar feature in the streets to which gradually the traders and surviving Chinese residents returned. Once more began the farce of foreign intercourse with the so-called Government of the Celestial Empire, and with it were immediately renewed all the intrigues and international jealousies which alone enable its rulers to maintain some sort of equilibrium in the midst of conflicting pressures.

The power behind the Throne, from this time until his death, was undoubtedly Jung Lu, but the Foreign Legations, still confused by memories and echoes of the siege, and suspicious of all information which did not conform to their expressed ideas of the causes of the Boxer Rising, failed to realise the truth, and saw in him a suspect who should by rights have suffered punishment with his fellow conspirators. But the actual facts of the case, and his individual actions as recorded beyond dispute in the diary of His Excellency Ching Shan, and unmistakably confirmed by other independent witnesses, were not then available in the Chancelleries. Accordingly, when Jung Lu first paid his formal official calls upon the Foreign Ministers, he was anything but gratified at the reception accorded to him. In vain it was that he assured one member of the Diplomatic Body, with whom he had formerly been on fairly good terms, that as Heaven was his witness he had done nothing in 1900 except his utmost to defend and save the Legations; his statements were entirely disbelieved, and so greatly was he chagrined at the injustice done him, that he begged the Empress Dowager

in all seriousness to allow him to retire from the Grand Council. But Tzŭ Hsi, fully realising the situation, assured him of her complete confidence, and in a highly laudatory decree refused his request.

On two subsequent occasions before her death, the populace and the foreign community in Peking were afforded opportunities of witnessing the Empress Dowager's return to the city from short excursions by railway, and on each of these her affable, almost familiar, attitude was a subject of general comment. The first occasion was in the following spring, when she visited the Eastern Tombs, and upon her return, sacrificing as usual before the shrine of the God of War in the *enceinte* of the Ch'ien-mên, she talked volubly with several of the ladies whom she had met at Court. After emerging from the Temple, she called upon one of the eunuchs to bring her opera glasses, with which she eagerly scanned the crowd looking down from the wall of the city, waving her handkerchief whenever she perceived a familiar face. On one occasion she even shouted up an enquiry asking after the health of the daughter of one of the Foreign Ministers. The Manchu Princes and Chamberlains of the Court were unable to conceal their indignation and wrath at such condescension on the part of the Empress Dowager towards those whom, in spite of 1900, they still regarded (and regard to this day) as outer barbarians. So much incensed were they that they even urged Chi Lu to get Her Majesty to desist, and to re-enter her chair, an invitation to which she paid not the slightest attention, being evidently well pleased at the violation of ceremonial etiquette which she was committing. It was noticed that the Emperor, on the other hand, took no notice whatsoever of the foreigners, and seemed to be sunk in a deep, listless melancholy.

The second occasion was after the Empress Dowager's visit to the Western Tombs, in April 1903, four days after the death of her faithful friend and adviser, Jung Lu. On this occasion Her Majesty appeared to be in very low spirits, descending from the train slowly, and with none of her wonted vivacity. She greeted Kuei Hsiang, her

H.M. The Empress Dowager and Ladies of her Court (1903).

Daughters of H. E. Yü Keng.

Second wife of late Emperor. H.M. Tzŭ Hsi. Wife of H. E. Yü Keng, ex-minister to Paris.

Empress Consort of Kuang-Hsü, now Empress Dowager.

brother, who was kneeling on the platform to receive her, with one curt sentence, "You have killed Jung Lu by recommending that useless doctor," and passed on to her chair without another word. It was on this occasion, receiving certain foreign ladies in the travelling palace erected for her at Pao-ting fu, that the Old Buddha alluded directly to the massacres of foreign missionaries which had taken place in that city, "with which she had, of course, nothing to do." No doubt by this time, and by force of repetition, Tzŭ Hsi had persuaded herself of her complete innocence; but however this may be, she undoubtedly won over most of the foreigners with whom she came in contact, by the charm and apparent sincerity of her manner.

Before settling down to the accustomed routine of life in the palace, the Empress Dowager, whose *penchant* for personal explanation in Imperial Edicts seemed to be growing upon her, issued a Decree which gained for her renewed sympathy from all classes of Chinese officials. After the usual exhortations to her faithful subjects to co-operate loyally in her schemes for Reform, to put off the old bad ways and to persist energetically in well-doing, she gives a graphic description of the hardships which she and the Emperor endured during her compulsory "tour to the west." After referring to the unforgettable shocks and sorrows of that journey, the Edict says:—

"I have now returned once more to my palace, and find the ancestral Temples reposing as of old in dignified and unbroken serenity. Beneath the deep awe which overcomes me in the presence of my glorious ancestors my soul feels an added weight of grief and remorse, and I only hope that by Heaven's continued favour I may yet live to accomplish some meritorious work."

XVIII

HER MAJESTY'S NEW POLICY

The crisis of 1900, all the horror of that abomination of desolation in her capital and the hardships of her wandering in the wilderness, had brought home to the Empress the inherent weakness of her country and the stern necessity for remedial measures. Already, before the issue of the penitential Decree, quoted in an earlier chapter, she had announced to the world, with characteristic decision, her intention to adopt new measures and to break with those hoary traditions of the past which, as she had learned, were the first cause of the rottenness of the State. Her subsequent policy became in fact (though she was careful never to admit it) a justification of those very measures which the Emperor had so enthusiastically inaugurated in 1898, but her methods differed from his in that she omitted no precaution for conciliating the conflicting interests about the Throne and for disarming the opposition of the *intransigeants* of the provinces.

The first intimation of Her Majesty's conversion to new ideals of Government was given to the world in an Edict issued at Hsi-an on the 28th January 1901, in the name of the Emperor. This document, drafted with the assistance of Jung Lu, is a remarkable example of Tzŭ Hsi's masculine intelligence and statecraft, though somewhat marred by those long-winded repetitions in which Chinese Edicts abound. It was received with enthusiastic delight by the *literati* throughout the Empire, even in Canton and the southern provinces, where, at the moment, Her Majesty was not personally popular. The vernacular Press claimed it as the most striking Edict in Chinese history. It combined an eloquent appeal to the people to accept the principle of reform together with a masterful justification

of China and her people *vis-à-vis* the outside world. It was most skilfully worded so as to placate all parties in the State and thus to enhance the reputation of the Old Buddha. The "Young China" party was particularly enthusiastic, for by this Decree Her Majesty definitely abandoned the principle of absolute autocracy which had been for centuries the corner-stone of the Chinese system of government. It was realised that so complete a departure from the traditions of the Manchu Dynasty, of the Imperial Clan and of all her previous convictions, could not have been attained but for the bitter lessons of 1900, and, admiration was therefore the more keen for the skill and courage with which, on the verge of old age, she resumed the burden of government in her ravaged capital. It was the ruling passion bravely asserted, and the sympathy of the nation could hardly be withheld from a ruler who thus bore her share in the national humiliation, who so frankly accepted responsibility for past errors and promised new and better methods for the future.

It was, of course, inevitable, in the light of all experience, that many of her subjects, as well as most foreigners, should doubt her sincerity, and should regard this Edict, like many others, as a case of "when the devil was sick." But gradually, after the return of the Court, as it became clear to her immediate retainers and high officials that this self-confident woman was really in earnest, and as she continued steadily to impress her new policy upon the reluctant Clansmen, her popularity with the people at large, and especially in the south (where it had been much damaged by her fierce suppression of the Cantonese reformers of 1898), was gradually restored. From this time forward to the end of her life, whatever may have been the good or bad faith of her advisers and chief officials, every act of her career is stamped with unmistakable signs of her sincerity in the cause of reform, borne out by her recorded words and deeds.

From the Boxer movement she had learned at a bitter cost the lesson she was now putting into practice, but for all that she remained to the end faithful in her affection

for the memory of the Boxer leaders; to the last she never failed to praise their loyalty to her person and the patriotic bravery of their attempt to expel the foreigner. But she had been compelled to learn in the hard school of experience the utter hopelessness of that attempt, and she was forced to the conclusion that, for the future, and until China should be strong enough, all anti-foreign proceedings must be suppressed.

Unflinchingly, therefore, she announced to her people a change of front unparalleled in the history of China. Certain it is (as was fully proved in the case of the Emperor in 1898) that no other ruler of the Dynasty could have proclaimed such drastic changes without causing serious dissensions and possibly civil war. But so masterly were her methods of dealing with the necessities of the situation, and so forcibly did the style and arguments of her Decrees appeal to the *literati,* that they carried very general conviction. Even the most bigoted Confucianists were won by her subtle suggestions as to what would have been the attitude of the Sage himself if confronted by such problems as the nation had now to face.

In the Decree recording her conversion the Emperor was made to renounce and condemn the Reformers of 1898 and all their work. This, however sincerely convinced Her Majesty might be of the necessity for remedial measures, was only natural. For it was never one of the weaknesses of this masterful woman to make direct confession of error for the benefit of her own immediate *entourage;* not thus is prestige maintained in the atmosphere of an Oriental Court. She was now prepared to adopt many of the reforms which K'ang Yu-wei and his friends had advocated, but for all-important purposes of "face" it must be made quite clear that, in her hands, they were something radically different and superior. In promulgating her new opinions she could not afford to say anything which might be construed as direct justification of that reform movement which she herself had so ruthlessly suppressed. And so the "stupid people" must clearly understand that her present programme was by no means "revolutionary" like that of K'ang Yu-wei and his "fellow-conspirators." Neverthe-

less, her proposals for reform went as far as theirs, and, in some cases, even further, the only real difference being that in this case she, the Old Buddha, was a prime mover, where before she had been an opponent.

Looking back on the six years of her life and rule which followed the return from exile, there can be but little doubt of the sincerity of her conversion to reform, although there is no reason to believe that her sentiments towards foreigners had undergone any change for the better. The lesson which had been brought home to her with crushing force in the rise and fall of the Boxer movement and in the capture of Peking, was that national inefficiency means national extinction, a lesson which not all the statesmen of western lands have fully learned. She had realised that the material forces of the western world were not to be met and overthrown by quotations from the classics, and that, if China was to continue to exist as an independent State she must follow the example of Japan and put her house in order with equipment and defences adapted from western models. And with Tzŭ Hsi to realise was to act, a quality which, more than all others, distinguished her from the ruck of her Manchu kinsmen and officials, sunk in their lethargic fatalism and helplessness.

The situation which confronted her at the outset was anything but simple. Apart from the time-honoured privileges of the Imperial clans, whose arrogant ignorance she had come to appreciate at its proper value, she must needs be cautious in handling the susceptibilities of the provincial gentry and *literati,* the backbone of China's collective intelligence. At the same time, as far as the foreign Powers were concerned, she must be careful to preserve to the full that dignity on which her prestige with her own people depended, that *l'empire c'est moi* attitude which had been rudely shaken by the events of 1900. Not as the chastened penitent would she appear in their eyes, but as the innocent and injured victim of circumstances beyond her control. There were, in fact, several distinct rôles to be played, and none of them were easy.

The Edict issued from Hsi-an in February 1901 had

been warmly applauded by scholars throughout the Empire as a literary feat of the first order, but most of the provincial officials (justified by all tradition and experience) regarded it as merely a classical *obiter dictum*, and proceeded, therefore, in their old way, certain in their minds that the Old Buddha was only amusing herself, as was her wont, by throwing dust in the eyes of the barbarian, and that she would not be displeased if her lieutenants were to proceed slowly in carrying them into effect. Unto the end, even in the face of the earnest exhortations of her valedictory Decree, there were many provincial officials who, for reasons of personal prejudice and self-interest, professed to believe that the Old Buddha had been merely playing a part, but we can find nothing in her official or private record during these six years to justify that belief. Just before her return to Peking she issued an Edict in which her own convictions were very clearly indicated.

"Ever since my sudden departure from the capital a year ago," she declared, "I have not ceased for a moment to brood over the causes of our national misfortunes and to feel deep remorse. Now, thanks to the protection of our tutelary deities, I am about to return to the capital. Whenever I think of the reasons for our undoing and the causes of our collective weakness I sincerely deplore the fact that I have not long ago introduced the necessary reforms, but I am now fully determined to put in force all possible measures for the reform of the State. Abandoning our former prejudices, we must proceed to adopt the best European methods of government. I am firmly determined to work henceforward on practical lines, so as to deliver the Empire from its present rotten state. Some of the necessary measures will naturally require longer periods of preparation than others, but after my return to Peking they must one and all gradually be introduced.

"In view of the urgent importance of this matter, Jung Lu and his colleagues have urged me to make a clear statement of my intentions and to declare without possibility of hesitation or doubt the irrevocable decision of the Throne, so that every official in the land may be stimulated to sincere and unremitting co-operation. For this reason I issue the present Decree solemnly recording my opinion that the condition of the Empire permits of no further evasion or delay in the matter of reform. Therein lies our only hope for the future. Myself and the Emperor, in the interests of all that we hold dear, have no

alternative but to face, and steadily to pursue, this new policy; we must make up our minds what are the things to strive for, and employ the right men to help us to attain them. We are, as mother and son, of one mind, endeavouring only to restore our fallen fortunes. You, our people, can best serve by united efforts to this end."

Tzŭ Hsi had not only realised the vast superiority of the material forces of the western world, but she had also been convinced of the immense intellectual and political forces which education and increased means of communication were steadily creating amongst her own subjects, forces with which, as she perceived, the effete and ignorant Manchus would have to reckon sooner or later. It is quite plain from her Edicts on this delicate subject that she realised clearly the dangers which threatened the Manchu rule. She saw that their class privileges, the right to tribute, and all the other benefits of sovereignty which the founders of the Dynasty had won by force of arms and opportunity, had now become an anachronism, and must in the near future involve the Manchus themselves in serious dangers and difficulties, unless, by fusion, means could be found to avert them. Among the rules laid down by the founders of the Dynasty for the maintenance of the pure Manchu stock was that which forbade intermarriage with Chinese. This law, though frequently violated in the garrisons of the south, had remained generally effective within the metropolitan province, where it had served its purpose of maintaining the ruling class and its caste. But the Empress had now come to understand that if China was to be preserved as a sovereign State, it must be rather by means of Chinese energy and intelligence grafted on to the Manchu stock, than by the latter's separate initiative. In January 1902, immediately after her return to Peking, she gave effect to her convictions on this subject in a remarkable Decree whereby she recommended that, for the future, Manchus and Chinese should intermarry. "At the time of the founding of our Dynasty," she says, "the customs and languages of the two races were greatly different, and this was in itself

reason sufficient for prohibiting intermarriage. But at the present day, little or no difference exists between them, and the time has come, therefore, to relax this law for the benefit of the Empire as a whole, and in accordance with the wishes of our people." In the same Edict Her Majesty deprecated the Chinese custom, which the Manchus had never adopted, of foot-binding, and urged that the educated classes should unite to oppose a custom so injurious to health and inhuman in practice. There was, however, to be no compulsion in this matter. In one respect only did she desire to adhere to the exclusive Manchu traditions, namely, as regards the selection of secondary wives for the Imperial harem, who must continue to be chosen exclusively from Manchu families; she did not desire "to incur any risk of confusion or dissension in the Palace, nor to fall into the error committed by the Ming Dynasty, in the indiscriminate selection of concubines, a matter affecting the direct and legitimate succession to the Throne." Nor would she expose her kinsmen to the risk of conspiracy against the Dynasty which would certainly occur if the daughters of the great Chinese houses were admitted to the palace. The law had been laid down once and for all by Nurhachi, and it was binding on every occupant of the Dragon Throne, namely, "no Manchu eunuchs, no Chinese concubines."

Her next step, in a decree which frankly deplored the hopeless ignorance of her kinsmen, was to authorise the Imperial clansmen and nobles to send their sons to be educated abroad, so that perchance the lump of their inefficiency might yet be leavened. Eligible youths, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, and of good physique, were to be selected and their expenses would be defrayed by the Government.

This much for the Manchus; but in regard to the whole question of education, which she declared to be the very root of all China's difficulties, she perceived, after prolonged consultations with Yüan Shih-k'ai and Chang Chih-tung, that so long as the classical system continued, with its strong hold of tradition upon the masses, it must con-

stitute the chief obstacle to any effective reform of the body politic. After much careful deliberation she decided that unless the whole system of classical examinations were abolished, root and branch, no tinkering with western learning could be of any practical use. The ancient system of arguing in a circle, which for over two centuries had characterised the ideal essay and hypnotised the ideal official, must undoubtedly triumph over all other educational methods, so long as it remained part of the official curriculum. Her Majesty took pains to point out by Edict that colleges had undoubtedly existed in the days of that model ruler, the Regent Duke Chou, more than three thousand years ago, on lines not greatly different from those of the foreign Universities of the present day; she proved also that the classical system was, so to speak, quite a recent innovation, having been introduced for the first time under the Ming Dynasty, about A.D. 1390. Eventually, in 1904, upon the advice of Yüan Shih-k'ai, approved by Chang Chih-tung, a Decree was issued finally abolishing the old system of examinations and making graduation at one of the modern colleges the only recognised path to official employment. At the same time, realising that the training of students in Japan, which had been proceeding on a very large scale, had produced a body of revolutionary scholars most undesirable in the eyes of the Government, she gave orders that arrangements should be made for sending more students in future to Europe and America.

This epoch-making announcement was followed by several other important Decrees, notably that which ordered the complete abolition of the opium traffic within a period of ten years, a Decree, which, embodying a sincere and powerful consensus of public opinion, has produced most unexpected results, marvellously creditable to the moral sense and recuperative energies of the Chinese race. The contrast is most striking between the widespread reform effected under this Edict, and the almost complete failure of those which set forth to reform the Metropolitan administration; these, thanks to the steady passive resist-

ance of the mandarin in possession, resulted merely in perpetuating the old abuses under new names. The one new Ministry created at that time, and saluted by foreigners as a sign of genuine progress, was that of Posts and Communications (Yu-Ch'uan pu), which was a by-word for corrupt practices since its establishment, and a laughing-stock among the Chinese themselves for inefficiency and extravagance.

After dealing with education, the Old Buddha turned her attention to a question which had frequently figured in recent memorials of progressive officials, namely, the abolition of torture and other abuses prevalent in the so-called judicial system of the Empire. She realised that if China were ever to obtain the consent of the western Powers to the abolition of the foreigner's rights of extra-territoriality, she must devise and enforce civil and criminal codes similar to those of civilised countries. Her Edict on this subject, though in form excellent, seems to lack something of the conviction which marks her other Decrees of this period; it is very different, for instance, from those dealing with the abolition of opium and the reform of education. Its principles were obviously contrary to all her previous ideas and practice, and it is only fair to say that its result, in spite of much drafting of codes, has been little or none, as far as the barbarous practices of the provincial Yamêns are concerned. She decreed that, pending the introduction of the criminal code, decapitation should be the extreme penalty of the law; dismemberment and mutilation were to be abolished as barbarous; branding, flogging, and the vicarious punishment of relatives were to cease. These savage penalties, she observed, were originally introduced into China under the Ming Dynasty, and had only been adopted by the Manchus, with other Chinese customs, against their own more merciful instincts.

Finally, in deference to the unmistakable and growing tendencies of public opinion in the south, Tzŭ Hsi took the first steps towards the introduction of constitutional government by sending an Imperial Commission (under Duke

Tsai Tse) to study the various systems in force in foreign countries, and their results. The return of this Mission was followed in the autumn of 1906 by the issue of the famous Decree in which she definitely announced her intention to grant a constitution, which should come into effect sooner or later, according to circumstances and the amount of energy or procrastination displayed by the officials and people in preparing themselves for the change. As an example of subtle argument calculated to appeal to the Chinese mind, the document is a masterpiece in its way. It says :—

"Ever since the foundation of the Dynasty one wise sovereign after another has handed down sage counsels to posterity; it has always been their guiding principle that methods of Government should be modified and adapted to meet the exigences of the moment and changing conditions. China's great and increasing danger to-day is largely due to her unwise adherence to antiquated methods; if we do not amend our educational and political systems, we shall be violating the spirit which animated our Imperial ancestors, and shall disappoint the best hopes of our people. Our Imperial Commissioners have reported to us that the prosperity and power of foreign nations are largely due to principles of constitutional government based on the will of the people, which assures bonds of union and sympathy between the Sovereign and his subjects. It is therefore our duty to consider by what means such a Constitution may be granted as shall retain the sovereign power in the hands of the Throne, and at the same time give effect to the wishes of the people in matters of administration. Our State being at present unprepared, and our people uneducated, any undue haste is inadvisable, and would lead to no practical results. We must first reform the official system, following this by the introduction of new laws, new methods of education, finance and military organisations, together with a police system, so that officials and people may come to realise what executive government means as a foundation and preparation for the granting of a Constitution."

It was not to be expected that even Tzŭ Hsi could frame so radical and comprehensive a programme of change without incurring the strongest opposition and criticism of those to whom the established order meant loaves and fishes: at Peking, however, owing to the absence of an

outspoken Press, the opposition ran beneath the surface, exercised in the time-honoured form of dogged adherence to the ancient methods by the officials and bureaucrats on whose goodwill all reform ultimately depends. Against anyone less masterful and less popular than Tzŭ Hsi the Clansmen would undoubtedly have concerted other and more forcible measures, but they knew their Old Buddha and went in wholesome fear of her wrath. It was only her exceptional position and authority that enabled her to introduce the machinery for the establishment of constitutional government, based on the Japanese model, and there is reason to believe that even at the time of her death many conservative Manchus did not regard that measure seriously.

But despite the promise of constitutional government, public opinion in the south, never restrained in its utterances by the free-lances of the vernacular Press of Hongkong and Shanghai, was outspoken in condemnation of Her Majesty's new policy, criticising her policy in general on the ground of her undignified truckling to Europeans. Lacking alike her masculine intelligence and courageous recognition of hard facts, making no allowance for the difficulties with which she was encompassed, and animated in many instances by a very real hatred of the Manchu rule, they attacked her in unmeasured terms of abuse; while the foreign Press of the Treaty Ports, naturally suspicious of her motives and mindful of her share in the anti-foreign rising, was also generally unsympathetic, if not hostile. In both cases knowledge of the woman's virility and vitality was lacking. Her critics failed to realise that, like most mortals, the Empress was a mixture of good and bad, of wisdom and error, largely swayed by circumstances and the human equations around her, as well as by an essentially feminine quality of mutability; but withal, and above all, a born leader of men and a politician of the very first order.

The following extracts from articles published in the Shanghai Press at that time, throw an instructive light on the spirit of Young China (like that of the Babu of India) as displayed in its anti-Manchu proclivities and bigoted

chauvinism. One critic, taking for his text the entertainments given by Her Majesty to the Foreign Legations, wrote:—

"There can be no objection to giving a banquet to anyone who is likely to be grateful and show some return for hospitality, but what possible good purpose can be served by feasting those who treat you with suspicion? We Chinese are wont to despise our ignorant rustics when they display servility to foreigners, but what is to be said when one in the exalted position of the Empress Dowager demeans herself by being on terms of affectionate intimacy with the wives of Foreign Ministers, and even with women belonging to the commercial and lower classes? Nowadays foreign food is served at the palace in a dining-room decked out in European style: the guests at these entertainments thank their Imperial hostess on taking leave, and the very next day their Legations will furiously rage against China at our Foreign Office. Therefore, as for moderating their barbarous ways, her food and her wines are simply wasted. As a matter of fact, these guests of hers do not scruple to compare her banquets of to-day with the melons and vegetables which she sent to the Legations during the siege, a comparison by no means flattering to Her Majesty. The thing is becoming a scandal. When Russia poured out entertainments in honour of Li Hung-chang she got something for her money; can it be that Her Majesty is looking to similar results in the present case for herself?"

Nevertheless, unheeding of criticism and strong in the wisdom of her own convictions, Tzŭ Hsi continued steadily on the lines which she had laid down as necessary for the future safety of the Empire. It was not to be expected that even her strong personality could overcome in a day the entrenched forces of native prejudice and conservatism within and without the palace. At the time of her death many of the chief strongholds of the ancient system (*e. g.* the power of the eunuchs and the organised corruption of officials) remained practically uncriticised and untouched; but at her passing she had marked out a rough course by which, if faithfully followed, the ship of State might yet be safely steered through the rocks and shallows of the dangerous seas ahead.

XIX

HER MAJESTY'S LAST DAYS

THE death of Jung Lu in April 1903 was a great grief to the Empress Dowager. In the course of her long life there was hardly any crisis or important event of her reign wherein she had not been greatly assisted by this devoted follower. Upon hearing of his death she issued a Decree from the Travelling Palace at Pao-ting fu, praising the patriotism and clear-sighted intelligence of the deceased, who, since the beginning of his career as an honorary licentiate had risen to be Controller of the Imperial Household, Tartar General and Viceroy, in all of which capacities he had rendered signal service. At the time of his death he had attained to the highest honours open to a subject in China, namely, the position of Grand Secretary and Grand Councillor. In this Decree Her Majesty laid particular stress on his endeavours to promote a good understanding with the foreign Powers in 1900. Further, in token of her affectionate regard, she bestowed upon him a coverlet with charms worked thereon from the Dharani Sutra in Sanscrit and Thibetan, to be used as a pall for his burial, and she commanded Prince Kung to proceed to the residence of the deceased, with ten officers of the Imperial Guard, to perform a sacrifice on her behalf to the soul of the departed statesman. She granted him the posthumous designation of "learned and loyal," together with the highest hereditary rank open to one who had not been a victorious military commander or a member of the Imperial Clan. His ancestral tablet was given a place at the Shrine of Good and Virtuous Officials, and three thousand taels (£350) were issued from the privy purse towards his funeral expenses.

In the summer of 1908 Tzŭ Hsi's generally robust health showed signs of failing, a fact which is recorded in her valedictory Decree, and one of no small importance in considering the coincident fact of the illness of the Emperor. Of the causes and manner of the latter's death, nothing will ever be definitely known; they lie buried with many another secret of the Forbidden City, in the hearts of Li Lien-ying and his immediate satellites. Even among the higher officials, Manchu and Chinese, of the capital, opinions differ, and many conflicting theories are current to account for the remarkable coincidence of the death of Tzŭ Hsi and her unhappy nephew on successive days. For those who seek it there is no lack of circumstantial evidence to justify the conclusion that the long-threatened Emperor was "removed" by the reactionaries, headed by the chief eunuch, who had only too good cause to fear his unfettered authority on the Throne. At the same time it is conceivably possible that many of the plots and proceedings of the Summer Palace at that time might have been unknown to Tzŭ Hsi, and that she was purposely kept in ignorance by those who foresaw the possibility of her early death and took their precautions accordingly, after the Oriental manner. Indeed, in the light of much trustworthy evidence of eye-witnesses, this seems a rational explanation of events to which any solution by theories of coincidence is evidently difficult. Most of the following account of Her Majesty's last days is derived from the statements of two high officials, one Manchu and the other Chinese, who were at that time on duty with the Court. Their testimony and their conclusions coincide, on the whole, with those of the best-informed and most reliable Chinese newspapers, whose news from the capital is also generally from official sources. We accept them, naturally, with all reserve, yet with an inclination to give the Empress Dowager, on this occasion, the benefit of their good opinions and our own doubts. The simultaneous deaths may possibly have been due to natural causes, but it is to be observed by the most sympathetic critic, that the account given by Her Majesty's loyal servants of her

behaviour immediately after the Emperor's death, is by no means suggestive of sorrow, but rather of relief.

It was in the previous autumn that the Emperor became very ill, so much so that he was gradually compelled during the last year of his life to desist from performance of the usual sacrifices, which entail no small expenditure of physical energy through their genuflections and continual prostrations. The impression gradually gained ground that His Majesty was not likely to live much longer, and it was remarked, and remembered as a significant fact, that the Old Buddha had some time before given orders for the engagement of special wet-nurses for the infant son of Prince Ch'un, born in February 1906. It was understood that these orders implied the selection of this infant Prince to succeed Kuang-Hsü; but although many attempts were made to induce her to declare herself on this subject, she declined to do so on the ground that her previous experience had been unlucky, that her selections had been the cause of much misunderstanding, and that, moreover, it was a house-law of the Dynasty that the heir to the throne could only be lawfully selected when the sovereign was *in extremis*, a rule which she had completely disregarded in the nomination of Prince Tuan's son in 1900.[1]

In this connection, there is every reason to believe that Tzŭ Hsi's superstitious nature, and the memory of the prophecies of woe uttered by the Censor Wu K'o-tu at the time of his protesting suicide, had undoubtedly led her to regret the violation of the sacred laws of succession which she committed in selecting Kuang-Hsü for the Throne. On more than one occasion in recent years she had endeavoured to propitiate the shade of the departed Censor, and public opinion, by conferring upon him posthumous honours. Towards the end of her reign, after the humiliations inflicted on China in successive wars by France, Japan and the coalition of the Allies, she was frequently heard to express remorse at having been led into courses of error which had brought down upon her

[1] This house-law was made by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung to prevent his Court officials from intriguing for the favour of the Heir Apparent.

the wrath of Heaven. In 1888, when the Temple of Heaven was struck by lightning, and again, when the chief gate of the Forbidden City took fire and was destroyed, she interpreted these events as marks of the Supreme Being's disapproval of her actions. The Emperor's subsequent conspiracy with K'ang Yu-wei and his associates of 1898, became in her eyes another judgment and visitation of Heaven. It may therefore reasonably be assumed that when the Boxer Princes persuaded her of the efficacy of their magic arts and of their ability to drive the foreigner into the sea, she seized upon the hope thus offered as a means of regaining the favour of the gods and atoning for past errors. Although in selecting the son of Prince Tuan to be heir to her son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih (thus passing over Kuang-Hsü), she had once more violated the house-laws of the Dynasty, there is no doubt that she took her risks in the certain hope that further prestige must accrue to her house and to herself, by the fact that the boy Emperor's father's, next to herself in power, would be hailed by the Chinese people as the Heaven-sent deliverer, the conqueror of the hated barbarian, and the saviour of his country. In other words, recognising that the mistakes she had committed had seriously injured her in the eyes of the nation, she determined to endeavour to retrieve them by one last desperate throw. Later, after the return from exile, when she realised that this heroic venture had been as misguided in its inception as any of her former misdeeds, she showed her splendid courage and resource by a swift *volte-face* in the adoption of those very reform measures which she had formerly opposed, and by annulling the appointment of Prince Tuan's son as Heir to the Throne. She thus cut herself adrift from all connection with the Boxer leaders as completely and unhesitatingly as she wiped out from the annals of her reign all reference to the Edicts which she had issued in their favour. The result brought about by this change of policy, and of the succession of Prince Ch'un's infant son to the Throne, was to establish more firmly than ever that junior branch of the Imperial family. It became generally accepted at

Court, that the first Prince Ch'un, the father of Kuang-Hsü and grandfather of the present sovereign, would eventually be canonised with the title of "Ti" or Emperor, which would practically make him, by posthumous right, the founder of a new dynastic branch. The problem of the direct succession, even in Chinese eyes, was never simple, and it was generally supposed (*e. g.* by *The Times* correspondent at Peking in October 1908) that the Empress Dowager would nominate Prince P'u Lun to succeed Kuang-Hsü, thus restoring the succession to the senior branch of the family. This would certainly have appealed to orthodox and literary officials throughout the Empire, and, as a means of appeasing the distressed ghost of the protesting Censor, would have been more effective than the course she actually adopted. Doctor Morrison, discussing this question of the succession before the event, expressed the general opinion that the appointment of another infant to succeed the Emperor Kuang-Hsü (involving another long Regency) would be fraught with great danger to the Dynasty. It was evident to all that the situation, lacking that strong hand which for half a century had held together the chaotic fabric of China's Government, suffered from the fact that for many years to come the supreme authority seemed destined to remain in the hands of a Regent, and a Regent whose position was *ab initio* undermined by the powerful influences brought to bear by the senior branch of the Imperial Clan. Tzŭ Hsi was fully aware of the position which would be created, or rather prolonged, by the selection of Prince Ch'un's son, and for this reason, no doubt, the selection of Kuang-Hsü's successor was postponed until the very day of her death. When, at last, confronted by the imperative necessity for action, she had to make up her mind, there were two things that chiefly weighed with her. These were, firstly, the promise that she had made to Jung Lu, and, secondly, her unconcealed dislike for Prince Ch'ing, who had made himself the chief spokesman for the claims of Prince P'u Lun. It was also only natural that she should wish to leave to her favourite niece (the consort of

Kuang-Hsü) the title and power of Empress Dowager, if only in reward for years of faithful and loyal service to herself. In other words, the claims of the human equation and her own inclinations outweighed, unto the end, the claims of orthodox tradition and the qualms of her conscience.

Throughout the winter of 1907 and the following spring, the Empress enjoyed her usual vigorous health. In April she went, as usual, to the Summer Palace, where she remained all through the hot season. With the heat, however, came a recurrence of her dysenteric trouble and in August she had a slight stroke of paralysis, as the result of which her face, hitherto remarkably youthful for a woman of seventy, took on a drawn and tired appearance. In other respects her health seemed fairly good; certainly her vigour of speech remained unimpaired, and she continued to devote unremitting attention to affairs of State. She was wont frequently to declare her ambition of attaining to the same age as Queen Victoria, a ruler for whom she professed the greatest admiration; she would say that she could trace, in the features of the English Queen, lines of longevity similar to those in her own. The Taoist Abbot, Kao, whom she used to receive in frequent audiences, and who possessed considerable influence over her, had prophesied that she would live longer than any former Empress of the Dynasty; but his prophecy was not fulfilled, for she died younger than three of her predecessors.

In the summer of 1908 the Old Buddha took a keen interest in the impending visit of the Dalai Lama, which had been arranged for the autumn. The chief eunuch, Li, begged her to cancel this visitation on the ground that it was notoriously unlucky for the "Living Buddha" and the Son of Heaven to be resident in one city at the same time. Either the priest or the sovereign would surely die, he said.[1] To this Tzŭ Hsi replied that she had long since

[1] The chief eunuch in reality objected to the Buddhist pontiff on his own account, for the Lama's exactions from the superstitious would naturally diminish his own opportunities.

decided in her mind that the Emperor's illness was incurable, and she saw no reason, therefore, to stop the coming of the Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, in July, she summoned certain Chinese physicians, educated abroad, to attend His Majesty, who had become greatly emaciated and very weak. They reported that he was suffering from Bright's disease. Their examination of the august patient and their diagnosis of his symptoms were necessarily perfunctory, inasmuch as etiquette prevented the application of the proper tests, but they professed to have verified the fact that the action of the heart was very weak. On the other hand, writers in the newspapers of the south did not hesitate to assert that the whole medical performance was a farce and that the death of the Emperor would undoubtedly take place so soon as the powers about the Throne had made up their minds that the Empress Dowager was not likely to live much longer.

According to the general consensus of opinion in the capital, the relations between the Old Buddha and His Majesty were not unfriendly at this period. It was said that shortly before his illness became acute the Empress Dowager had encouraged him to take a more active part in affairs of State, and to select candidates for certain high offices: she certainly renewed the practice of showing him Decrees for the formality of his concurrence. When the reformer Wang Chao returned from flight, and gave himself up to the police, she, who had vowed the death of this man in 1898, invited His Majesty to decide what punishment should now be inflicted upon him. The Emperor, after long reflection, suggested that his life be spared. "By all means," replied the Old Buddha, "I had fully intended to forgive him, but desired to hear your opinion. Full well I know your sincere hatred of fellows like K'ang Yu-wei and his asociates, and I was afraid, therefore, that you might insist on the immediate decapitation of Wang Chao." She evidently believed that she had completely eradicated from His Majesty's mind all opposition to her wishes.

As the Emperor's health grew worse, the eunuchs were

instructed not to keep him waiting when calling upon the Empress Dowager and he was also excused at the meetings of the Grand Council from awaiting her arrival and departure on his knees. A Manchu holding a high position at Court testifies to the truth of the following incident. One morning, after perusal of a Censor's Memorial, which contained several inaccurate statements, His Majesty observed to the Grand Council: "How little of truth there is in common rumour. For instance, I know myself to be really ill, yet here it is denied that there is anything the matter with me." The Empress Dowager here broke in: "Who has dared to utter such falsehoods? If caught, he will certainly be beheaded." Kuang-Hsü then proceeded to say: "I am really getting weaker every day, and do not see my way to performing the necessary ceremonies on the occasion of Your Majesty's approaching birthday." Compassionately the Old Buddha replied: "It is more important to me that you should recover your health than that you should knock your head on the ground in my honour." The Emperor fell on his knees to thank her for these gracious words, but collapsed in a fainting fit. Prince Ch'ing thereupon advised that a certain doctor, Ch'ü Yung-chiu, trained in Europe, should be called in, but his advice was not followed till later. On the following day His Majesty enquired of the Court physicians in attendance, whose medical training is the same as that which has been handed down since the days of the T'ang Dynasty, whether his disease was likely to be fatal. "The heart of Your Emperor is greatly disturbed," said he. Dr. Lu Yung-ping replied: "There is nothing in Your Majesty's present condition to indicate any mortal disease. We beseech Your Majesty to be calm: it is for us, your servants, to be perturbed in spirit."

After Tzŭ Hsi's stroke of paralysis, the wildest rumours were circulated as to her condition, so much so that, realising the excited state of provincial opinion, and its relation to the question of the Constitution which was to have been granted, Her Majesty decided to carry out without further delay the promise she made in 1906. On the 1st of the 8th

Moon, she therefore promulgated a Decree, showing signs of the same spirit of lofty statesmanship as was displayed by the rulers of Japan, and evidently based on their example, whereby it was promised that a constitutional form of government would be completely established within a period of nine years. At the same time it was decreed that every branch of the government should institute the changes necessary to facilitate the introduction of the new dispensation. On issuing this Decree she expressed her hope of living to witness the convening of the first Chinese Parliament, and added that if Prince Tuan's son had proved himself worthy, and had remained Heir Apparent, he would by now have been of age to carry on the government after the Emperor's death. Age was creeping upon her, and she would be glad to retire to the Summer Palace for her declining years. As long as matters remained in their present state, it would be necessary to refer important questions for her decision, but she greatly wished that the period of her Regency should not be indefinitely prolonged.

In September occurred the fiftieth birthday of the ex-Viceroy of Chihli Yüan Shih-k'ai, while the Court was still in residence at the Summer Palace. The Old Buddha showered costly gifts upon her trusted Minister, and almost every high official in Peking attended the birthday ceremonies to present congratulations and gifts. Conspicuous by his absence, however, was the Emperor's brother, Prince Ch'un (subsequently Regent), who had applied for short leave in order to avoid being present, and who offered no presents.

A significant incident occurred in connection with the birthday ceremonies. Among the many complimentary scrolls, presented by friends and hanging on the walls, were a pair which attracted much attention, until they were hurriedly removed. One contained the following inscription: "5th day of the 8th Moon of the Wu Shen year" (this was the date of the crisis of the *coup d'état* when Yüan Shih-k'ai warned Jung Lu of the plot, and thus brought about the practical dethronement of the Emperor), and on the other were the words: "May the Emperor live ten

View, from the K'un Ming Lake, of the Summer Palace.

thousand years! May Your Excellency live ten thousand years."

The words *wan sui*, meaning "ten thousand years," are not applicable to any subject of the Throne, and the inner meaning of these words was, therefore, interpreted to be a charge against Yüan of conspiring for the Throne. It was clear that some enemy had sent the scrolls as a reminder of Yüan's betrayal of his Sovereign ten years before, and that they had been hung up either as the result of connivance or carelessness on the part of Yüan's people. Four months later, when the great ex-Viceroy fell, this incident was remembered and inevitably connected with Prince Ch'un's non-appearance at the birthday ceremonies.

In September, the Dalai Lama reached Peking, but owing to a dispute on certain details of ceremonial, his audience was postponed. It was finally arranged that the Pontiff should "ko-tow" to the Throne, and that the Emperor should then rise from his seat and invite the Lama to sit beside him on a cane couch. This ceremonial was most reluctantly accepted, and only after much discussion, by the Dalai Lama, who considered his dignity seriously injured by having to "ko-tow." He had brought with him much tribute, and was therefore the more disappointed at the Old Buddha's failure to show him the marks of respect which he had expected. His audience was held early in October, when Her Majesty requested him to offer up prayers regularly for her long life and prosperity.

In October, the foreign Ministers were also received at the Summer Palace, and on the 20th of that month the Court returned to the Lake Palace for the winter. On this, her last State progress, the Empress Dowager approached the city as usual in her State barge, by the canal which joins the Summer Palace Lake with the waters of the Winter Palace, proceeding in it as far as the Temple of Imperial Longevity, which is situated on the banks of this canal. It was observed that as she left the precincts of the Summer Palace she gazed longingly towards the lofty walls that rise from the banks of the lake, and from thence to the

hills receding into the far distance. Turning to the "Lustrous" concubine who sat at her feet, she expressed her fears that the critical condition of the Emperor would prevent her from visiting her favourite residence for a long time to come.

The Old Buddha sat in a cane chair on the raised deck of her magnificent barge adorned with carved dragons and phœnixes; she was surrounded by her favourite eunuchs, and half a dozen of the chief ladies of the Court. As she descended from the barge, supported by two eunuchs, and entered the sedan-chair which bore her to within the temple precincts, her vivacity and good spirits formed a subject of general comment. She performed the usual sacrifices at the Temple of Imperial Longevity, a shrine which she had liberally endowed; but it was remembered after her death, as an unfortunate omen, that the last stick of incense failed to ignite. Upon leaving the temple she begged the priests to chant daily liturgies and to pray for her longevity, in view of her approaching birthday.

After leaving the temple precincts she proceeded with her ladies-in-waiting to the Botanical and Zoological Garden, which lie just outside the "West-Straight" gate of the city. On arrival at the gates, she insisted upon descending from her sedan-chair, and made the entire round of the gardens on foot. She expressed interest and much pleasure at the sight of animals which she had never seen before, and announced her intention of frequently visiting the place. She asked numerous questions of the keepers, being especially interested in the lions, and created much amusement amongst her immediate *entourage* by asking the director of the gardens (a Manchu official of the Household) for information as to where the animals came from, a subject on which he was naturally quite uninformed. "You don't seem to know much about zoology," she observed, and turned from the crestfallen official to address one of the keepers in a most informal manner. The chief eunuch, Li Lien-ying, wearied by such unwonted exercise, implored Her Majesty not to tire herself, but the Old Buddha took pleasure, clearly malicious,

in hurrying him round the grounds. The occasion was unusual and remarkably informal, and the picture brings irresistibly to the English mind memories of another strong-minded Queen and her inspection of another garden, where heads were insecure for gardeners and Cheshire cats. Eye-witnesses of that day's outing commented freely on their Imperial Mistress's extraordinary spirits and vitality, predicting for her many years of life.

Her Majesty, whose memory on unexpected subjects was always remarkable, referred on this occasion to the elephant which had been presented to her by Tuan Fang upon his return from Europe, and which, together with several other animals for which she had no fitting accommodation in the palace grounds, was the first cause and first inmate of the Zoological Gardens. The elephant in question had originally been in charge of the two German keepers who had accompanied it from Hagenbeck's establishment; these men had frequently but unsuccessfully protested at the insufficient rations provided for the beast by the Mandarin in charge. Eventually the elephant had died of slow starvation, and the keepers had returned to Europe, after obtaining payment of their unexpired contracts, a result which brought down upon the offending official Her Majesty's severe displeasure. She referred now to this incident, and expressed satisfaction that most of the animals appeared to be well cared for, though the tigers' attendant received a sharp rebuke.

After Her Majesty's return to the Winter Palace every thing was given over to preparations for the celebration of her seventy-third birthday on the 3rd of November. The main streets of the city were decorated, and in the palace itself arrangements were made for a special theatrical performance to last for five days. A special ceremony, quite distinct from the ordinary birthday congratulations of the Court, was arranged for the Dalai Lama, who was to make obeisance before Her Majesty at the head of his following of priests. The health of His Majesty did not permit of his carrying out the prescribed ceremony of prostration before Her Majesty's Throne in the main Palace of

Ceremonial Phœnixes; he therefore deputed a Prince of the Blood to represent him in the performance of this duty, and those who knew its deep significance on such an occasion realised that the condition of his health must indeed be desperate. This impression was confirmed by the fact that he was similarly compelled to abandon his intention of being present at a special banquet to be given to the Dalai Lama in the Palace of Tributary Envoys. The high priest, who had been compelled to kneel outside the banquet hall to await the arrival of His Majesty, was greatly incensed at this occurrence.

At eight in the morning of the birthday His Majesty left his palace in the "Ocean Terrace" and proceeded to the Throne Hall. His emaciated and wobegone appearance was such, however, that the Old Buddha took compassion upon him, and bade his attendant eunuchs support him to his palanquin, excusing him from further attendance. Later in the day she issued a special Decree praising the loyalty of the Dalai Lama, and ordering him to return promptly to Thibet, "there to extol the generosity of the Throne of China, and faithfully to obey the commands of the Sovereign Power." The Empress Dowager spent the afternoon of her birthday in the congenial amusement of a masquerade, appearing in the costume of the Goddess of Mercy, attended by a numerous suite of concubines, Imperial Princesses, and eunuchs, all in fancy dress. They picnicked on the lake, and Her Majesty appeared to be in the very highest spirits. Unfortunately, towards evening, she caught a chill, and thereafter, partaking too freely of a mixture of clotted cream and crab apples, she had a return of the dysenteric complaint from which she had suffered all through the summer. On the following day she attended to affairs of State as usual, reading a vast number of memorials and recording her decision thereon, but on the 5th of November neither she nor the Emperor were sufficiently well to receive the Grand Council, so that all business of government was suspended for two days. Upon hearing of Her Majesty's illness, the Dalai Lama hastened to present her with an image of Buddha, which,

THE EMPRESS DOWAGER, WITH THE CHIEF EUNUCH, LI LIEN-YING

he said, should be despatched forthwith to her mausoleum at the hills, the building of which had just been completed under the supervision of Prince Ch'ing.[1] The high priest urged all haste in transmitting this miracle-working image to her future burial-place; if it were done quickly, he said, her life would be prolonged by many years, because the unlucky conjunction of the stars now affecting her adversely would avail nothing against the magic power of this image. The Old Buddha was greatly reassured by the Dalai Lama's cheerful prognostications, and next morning held audience as usual. She commanded Prince Ch'ing to proceed without delay to the tombs, and there to deposit the miraculous image on the altar.[2] She ordered him to pay particular attention to the work done at the mausoleum, and to make certain that her detailed instructions had been faithfully carried out. Prince Ch'ing demurred somewhat at these instructions, inquiring whether she really wished him to leave Peking at a time when she herself and the Emperor were both ill. But the Old Buddha would brook no argument, and peremptorily ordered him to proceed as instructed. "I am not likely to die," she said, "during the next few days; already I am feeling much better. In any case you will do as you are told." On Monday, November 9th, both the Empress Dowager and the Emperor were present at a meeting of the Grand Council, and a special audience was given to the Educational Commissioner of Chihli province, about to leave for his post. At this audience the Old Buddha spoke with some bitterness of the increasing tendency of the student class to give vent to revolutionary ideas, and she commanded the Commissioner of Education to do all in his power to check their political activities.

Shortly afterwards four more physicians, who had come

[1] He had succeeded Jung Lu as custodian of the mausolea.

[2] The Imperial Mausoleum lies about ninety miles to the east of Peking, covering a vast enclosure of magnificent approach and decorated with splendid specimens of the best style of Chinese architecture. It consists of four palaces, rising one behind the other, and at the back of the fourth and highest stands the huge mound classically termed the "Jewelled Citadel," under which lies the spacious grave chamber.

up from the provinces, were admitted to see His Majesty. That same afternoon he had a serious relapse, and from that day forward never left his palace. On the following morning he sent a dutiful message (or it was sent for him) enquiring after the Empress Dowager's health, she being also confined to her room and holding no audiences. The Court physicians reported badly of both their Imperial patients: being fearful as to the outcome, they begged the Comptroller-General of the Household to engage other physicians in their place. The Grand Council sent a message to Prince Ch'ing, directing him to return to Peking with all haste, his presence being required forthwith on matters of the highest importance. Travelling night and day, he reached the capital at about eight o'clock in the morning of the 13th, and hastened to the palace. He found the Old Buddha cheerful and confident of ultimate recovery, but the Emperor was visibly sinking, his condition being comatose, with short lucid intervals. His last conscious act had been to direct his Consort to inform the Empress Dowager that he regretted being unable to attend her, and that he hoped that she would appoint an Heir Apparent without further delay. Whether these dutiful messages were spontaneous or inspired, and indeed, whether they were ever sent by the Emperor, is a matter upon which doubt has been freely expressed.

Immediately after the arrival of Prince Ch'ing, an important audience was held in the Hall of Ceremonial Phœnixes. Her Majesty was able to mount the Throne, and, though obviously weak, her unconquerable courage enabled her to master her physical ailments, and she spoke with all her wonted vehemence and lucidity. A well-informed member of the Grand Council, full of wonder at such an exhibition of strength of will, has recorded the fact that she completely led and dominated the Council. There were present Prince Ch'ing, Prince Ch'un, the Grand Councillor Yüan Shih-k'ai, and the Grand Secretaries Chang Chih-tung, Lu Ch'uan-lin and Shih Hsü.

Her Majesty announced that the time had come to nominate an Heir to the Emperor T'ung-Chih, in accordance with that Decree of the first day of the reign of Kuang-

Hsü, wherein it was provided that the deceased Sovereign's ancestral rites should be safeguarded by allowing him precedence over his successor of the same generation. Her choice, she said, was already made, but she desired to take the opinion of the Grand Councillors in the first instance. Prince Ch'ing and Yüan Shih-k'ai then recommended the appointment of Prince P'u Lun, or, failing him, Prince Kung. They thought the former, as senior great-grandson of Tao-Kuang, was the more eligible candidate, and with this view Prince Ch'ing seemed disposed to agree. The remaining Grand Councillors, however, advised the selection of Prince Ch'un's infant son.

After hearing the views of her Councillors, the Old Buddha announced that long ago, at the time when she had betrothed the daughter of Jung Lu to Prince Ch'un, she had decided that the eldest son of this marriage should become Heir to the Throne, in recognition and reward of Jung Lu's lifelong devotion to her person, and his paramount services to the Dynasty at the time of the Boxer rising. She placed on record her opinion that he had saved the Manchus by refusing to assist in the attack upon the Legations. In the 3rd Moon of this year she had renewed her pledge to Jung Lu's widow, her oldest friend, just before she died. She would, therefore, now bestow upon Prince Ch'un as Regent, the title of "Prince co-operating in the Government," a title one degree higher than that which had been given to Prince Kung in 1861, who was made "Adviser to the Government" by herself and her Co-Regent.

Upon hearing this decision, Prince Ch'un arose from his seat and repeatedly "ko-towed" before Her Majesty, expressing a deep sense of his own unworthiness. Once more Yüan Shih-k'ai courageously advanced the superior claims of Prince P'u Lun: he was sincerely of opinion that the time had come for the succession to be continued along the original lines of primogeniture; it was clear also that he fully realised that Prince Ch'un was his bitter enemy. The Old Buddha turned upon him with an angry reprimand. "You think," she said, "that I am old, and in my dotage, but you should have learned by now that

when I make up my mind nothing stops me from acting upon it. At a critical time in a nation's affairs a youthful Sovereign is no doubt a source of danger to the State, but do not forget that I shall be here to direct and assist Prince Ch'un." Then, turning to the other Councillors, she continued: "Draft two Decrees at once, in my name, the first, appointing Tsai-feng, Prince Ch'un, to be 'Prince co-operating in the Government' and the second commanding that P'u Yi, son of Prince Ch'un, should enter the palace forthwith, to be brought up within the precincts." She ordered Prince Ch'ing to inform the Emperor of these Decrees.

Kuang-Hsü was still conscious, and understood what Prince Ch'ing said to him. "Would it not have been better," he said, "to nominate an adult? No doubt, however, the Empress Dowager knows best." Upon hearing of the appointment of Prince Ch'un to the Regency, he expressed his gratification. This was at 3 P.M.; two hours later the infant Prince had been brought into the palace, and was taken by his father to be shown both to the Empress Dowager and the Emperor. At seven o'clock on the following morning the physicians in attendance reported that His Majesty's "nose was twitching and his stomach rising," from which signs they knew that his end was at hand. During the night, feeling that death was near, he had written out his last testament, in a hand almost illegible, prefacing the same with these significant words:—

"We were the second son of Prince Ch'un when the Empress Dowager selected Us for the Throne. She has always hated Us, but for Our misery of the past ten years Yüan Shih-k'ai is responsible, and one other" (the second name is said to have been illegible). "When the time comes I desire that Yüan be summarily beheaded."

The Emperor's consort took possession of this document, which, however, was seen by independent witnesses. Its wording goes to show that any conciliatory atitude on the part of the Emperor during the last year must have been inspired by fear and not by any revival of affection.

Later in the day a Decree was promulgated, announcing to the inhabitants of Peking and the Empire that their

THE SON OF HEAVEN.
H.M. HSÜAN-T'UNG, EMPEROR OF CHINA.

Sovereign's condition was desperate, and calling on the provinces to send their most skilful physicians post-haste to the capital so that, perchance, His Majesty's life might yet be saved. The Decree described in detail the symptoms, real or alleged, of Kuang-Hsü's malady. It was generally regarded as a perfunctory announcement of an unimportant event, long expected.

At 3 P.M. the Empress Dowager came to the Ocean Terrace to visit the Emperor, but he was unconscious, and did not know her. Later, when a short return of consciousness occurred, his attendants endeavoured to persuade him to put on the Ceremonial Robes of Longevity, in which etiquette prescribes that sovereigns should die. It is the universal custom that, if possible, the patient should don these robes in his last moments, for it is considered unlucky if they are put on after death. His Majesty, however, obstinately declined, and at five o'clock he died, in the presence of the Empress Dowager, his consort, the two secondary consorts, and a few eunuchs. The Empress Dowager did not remain to witness the ceremony of clothing the body in the Dragon Robes, but returned forthwith to her own palace, where she gave orders for the issue of his valedictory Decree and for the proclamation of the new Emperor.

The most interesting passage of the Emperor's valedictory Decree was the following: "Reflecting on the critical condition of our Empire, we have been led to combine the Chinese system with certain innovations from foreign countries. We have endeavoured to establish harmony between the common people and converts to Christianity. We have reorganised the army and founded colleges. We have fostered trade and industries and have made provision for a new judicial system, paving also the way for a Constitutional form of government, so that all our subjects may enjoy the continued blessings of peace." After referring to the appointment of the Regent and the nomination of a successor to the Dragon Throne, he concluded (or rather the Empress concluded for him) with a further reference to the Constitution, and an appeal to his Ministers to purify their hearts and prepare

themselves, so that, after nine years, the new order may be accomplished, and the Imperial purposes successfully achieved.

The Old Buddha appeared at this juncture to be in particularly good spirits, astonishing all about her by her vivacity and keenness. She gave orders that a further Decree be published, in the name of the new Emperor, containing the usual laudation of the deceased monarch and an expression of the infant Emperor's gratitude to the Empress Dowager for her benevolence in placing him on the Throne.

It will be remembered that the Censor Wu K'o-tu committed suicide at the beginning of Kuang-Hsü's reign, as an act of protest at the irregularity in the succession, which left no heir to the Emperor T'ung-Chih, that monarch's spirit being left desolate and without a successor to perform on his behalf the ancestral sacrifices. The child, P'u Yi, having now been made heir by adoption to T'ung-Chih, in fulfilment of the promise made by Tzŭ Hsi at the time of this sensational suicide, it appeared as if the irregularity were about to be repeated, and the soul of Kuang-Hsü to be left in a similar orbate condition in the Halls of Hades, unless some means could be found to solve the difficulty and meet the claims of both the deceased Emperors. In the event of Kuang-Hsü being left without heir or descendant to perform the all-important worship at his shrine, there could be but little doubt that the feelings of the orthodox would again be outraged, and the example of Wu K'o-tu might have been followed by other Censors. The Empress Dowager, realising the importance of the question, solved it in her own masterful way by a stroke of policy which, although without precisely applicable precedent in history, nevertheless appeared to satisfy all parties, and to placate all prejudices, if only by reason of its simplicity and originality. Her Decree on the subject was as follows :—

"The Emperor T'ung-Chih, having left no heir, was compelled to issue a Decree to the effect that so soon as a child should be born to His Majesty Kuang-Hsü, that child would

be adopted as Heir to the Emperor T'ung-Chih. But now his Majesty Kuang-Hsü has ascended on high, dragon-borne, and he also has left no heir. I am, therefore, now obliged to decree that P'u Yi, son of Tsai Feng, the 'Prince co-operating in the Government,' should become heir by adoption to the Emperor T'ung-Chih, and that, at the same time, he should perform joint sacrifices at the shrine of His Majesty Kuang-Hsü."

To those who are acquainted with the tangled web of Chinese Court ceremonial and the laws of succession, it would seem that so simple (and so new) an expedient might suitably have been adopted on previous similar occasions, since all that was required was to make the individual living Emperor assume a dual personality towards the dead, and one cannot help wondering whether the classical priestcraft which controls these things would have accepted the solution so readily at the hands of anyone less masterful and determined than Tzŭ Hsi.

In a subsequent Decree the Empress Dowager handed over to the Regent full control in all routine business, reserving only to herself the last word in all important matters of State. The effect of this arrangement was to place Prince Ch'un in much the same position of nominal sovereignty as that held by Kuang-Hsü himself, until such time as the young Emperor should come of age, or until the death of the Empress Dowager. In other words, Tzŭ Hsi had once more put in operation the machinery by which she had acquired and held the supreme power since the death of her husband, the Emperor Hsien-Feng. There is little doubt that at this moment she fully expected to live for many years more, and that she made her plans so as to enjoy to the end uninterrupted and undiminished authority. In her Decree on this subject, wherein, as usual, she justifies her proceedings by reference to the critical condition of affairs, she states that the Regent is to carry on the Government "subject always to the instructions of the Empress Dowager," and there can be no doubt that had she lived the Emperor's brother would no more have been permitted any independent initiative or authority than the unfortunate Kuang-Hsü himself.

XX

TZŬ HSI'S DEATH AND BURIAL

At the close of a long and exciting day, Her Majesty retired to rest on the 14th of November, weary with her labours but apparently much improved in health. Next morning she arose at her usual hour, 6 A.M., gave audience to the Grand Council and talked for some time with the late Emperor's widow, with the Regent and with his wife, the daughter of Jung Lu. By a Decree issued in the name of the infant Emperor, she assumed the title of Empress Grand Dowager, making Kuang-Hsü's widow Empress Dowager. Elaborate ceremonies were planned to celebrate the bestowal of these new titles, and to proclaim the installation of the Regent. Suddenly, at noon, while sitting at her meal, the Old Buddha was seized with a fainting fit, long and severe. When at last she recovered consciousness, it was clear to all that the stress and excitement of the past few days had brought on a relapse, her strength having been undermined by the long attack of dysentery. Realising that her end was near, she hurriedly summoned the new Empress Dowager, the Regent and the Grand Council to the palace, where, upon their coming together, she dictated the following Decree, speaking in the same calm tones which she habitually used in transacting the daily routine of Government work:—

"By command of the Empress Grand Dowager: Yesterday I issued an Edict whereby Prince Ch'un was made Regent, and I commanded that the whole business of Government should be in his hands, subject only to my instructions. Being seized of a mortal sickness, and being without hope of recovery, I now order that henceforward the government of the Empire shall be entirely in the hands of the Regent. Nevertheless, should there arise any question of vital importance, in regard to which an expression of the Empress Dowager's opinion is desirable, the Regent shall apply in person to her for instructions, and act accordingly."

The significance of the conclusion of this Decree is apparent to anyone familiar with Chinese Court procedure and with the life history of the Empress herself. Its ingenious wording was expressly intended to afford to the new Empress Dowager and the Yehonala Clan an opportunity for intervention at any special crisis, thus maintaining the Clan's final authority and safeguarding its position in the event of any hostile move by the Regent or his adherents. The result of this precaution was manifested on the occasion of the dismissal of Tuan Fang from the Viceroyalty of Chihli for alleged want of respect in connection with the funeral ceremonies of the Empress Dowager, an episode which showed clearly that the Regent would have no easy game to play, and that the new Empress Dowager, Lung Yü, had every intention to defend the position of the Clan and to take advantage thereof, along lines very similar to those followed by her august predecessor.

After issuing the Decree above quoted, the Empress Dowager, rapidly sinking, commanded that her valedictory Decree be drafted and submitted to her for approval. This was done quickly. After perusing the document, she proceeded to correct it in several places, notably by the addition of the sentence: "It became my inevitable and bounden duty to assume the Regency." Commenting on this addition, she volunteered the explanation that she wished it inserted because on more than one occasion her assumption of the supreme power had been wrongfully attributed to personal ambition, whereas, as a matter of fact, the welfare of the State had always weighed with her as much as her own inclinations, and she had been forced into this position. From her own pen also came the touching conclusion of the Decree, that sentence which begins: "Looking back over the memories of these fifty years," etc. She observed, in writing this, that she had nothing to regret in her life, and could only wish that it might have lasted for many years more. She then proceeded to bid an affectionate farewell to her numerous personal attendants and the waiting maids around her, all of whom were overcome

by very real and deep grief. To the end her mind remained quite clear; and, at the very point of death, she continued to speak as calmly as if she were just about to set out on one of her progresses to the Summer Palace. Again and again, when all thought the end had come, she recovered consciousness, and up to the end the watchers at her bedside could not help hoping (or fearing, as the case might be with them) that she would yet get the better of Death. At the last, *in articulo mortis*, they asked her, in accordance with the Chinese custom, to pronounce her last words. Strangely significant was the answer of the extraordinary woman who had moulded and guided the destinies of the Chinese people for half a century: "Never again," she said, "allow any woman to hold the supreme power in the State. It is against the house-law of our Dynasty and should be strictly forbidden. Be careful not to permit eunuchs to meddle in Government matters. The Ming Dynasty was brought to ruin by eunuchs, and its fate should be a warning to my people." Tzŭ Hsi died, as she had lived, above the law, yet jealous of its fulfilment by others. Only a few hours before she had provided for the transmission of authority to a woman of her own clan: now, confronting the dark Beyond, she hesitated to perpetuate a system which, in any but the strongest hands, could not fail to throw the Empire into confusion. She died, as she had lived, a creature of impulse and swiftly changing moods, a woman of infinite variety.

At 3 P.M., straightening her limbs, she expired with her face to the south, which is the correct position, according to Chinese ideas, for a dying sovereign. It was reported by those who saw her die that her mouth remained fixedly open, which the Chinese interpret as a sign that the spirit of the deceased is unwilling to leave the body and to take its departure for the place of the Nine Springs.

Thus died Tzŭ Hsi; and when her ladies and handmaidens had dressed the body in its Robes of State, embroidered with the Imperial Dragon, her remains and those of the Emperor were borne from the Lake Palace to the Forbidden City, through long lines of their kneeling sub-

jects, and were reverently laid in separate Halls of the Palace, with all due state and ceremony.

The valedictory Decree of Tzŭ Hsi, the last words from that pen which had indeed been mightier than many swords, was for the most part a faithful reproduction of the classical models, the orthodox swan-song of the ruler of a people which makes of its writings a religion. Its concluding words were as follows:—

"Looking back upon the memories of these last fifty years, I perceive how calamities from within and aggression from without have come upon us in relentless succession, and that my life has never enjoyed a moment's respite from anxiety. But to-day definite progress has been made towards necessary reforms. The new Emperor is but an infant, just reaching the age when wise instruction is of the highest importance. The Prince Regent and all our officials must henceforward work loyally together to strengthen the foundations of our Empire. His Majesty must devote himself to studying the interests of the country and so refrain from giving way to personal grief. That he may diligently pursue his studies, and hereafter add fresh lustre to the glorious achievements of his ancestors, is now my most earnest prayer.

"Mourning to be worn for only twenty-seven days.

"Cause this to be everywhere known!

"Tenth Moon, 23rd day (November the 15th)."

The title by which Her Majesty was canonised contains no less than twenty-two characters, sixteen of which were hers at the day of her death, the other six having been added in the Imperial Decrees which recorded her decease and praised her glorious achievements. The first character "Dutiful"—*i. e.* to her husband—is always accorded to a deceased Empress. It is significant of the unpractical nature of the *literati*, or of their cynicism, that the second of her latest titles signifies "reverend," implying punctilious adherence to ancestral traditions! The third and fourth mean "Equal of Heaven," which places her on a footing of equality with Confucius, while the fifth and sixth raise her even higher than the Sage in the national Pantheon, for it means "Increase in Sanctity," of which Confucius was only a "Manifestor." In the records of the Dynasty

she will henceforth be known as the Empress "Dutiful, Reverend and Glorious," a title, according to the laws of Chinese honorifics, higher than any woman ruler has hitherto received since the beginning of history.

Since her death, the prestige of the Empress Dowager, and her hold on the imagination of the people, have grown rather than decreased. Around her coffin, while it lay first in her Palace of Peaceful Longevity and later in a hall at the foot of the Coal Hill, north of the Forbidden City, awaiting the appointed day propitious for burial, there gathered something more than the conventional regrets and honours which fall usually to the lot of China's rulers. Officials as well as people felt that with her they had lost the strong hand of guidance, and a personality which appealed to most of them as much from the human as from the official point of view. Their affectionate recollections of the Old Buddha were clearly shown by the elaborate sacrifices paid to her *manes* at various periods from the day of her death to that day, a year later, when her ancestral tablet was brought home to the Forbidden City from the Imperial tombs with all pomp and circumstance.

On the All Souls' day of the Buddhists, celebrated in the 7th Moon, and which fell in the September following her death, a magnificent barge, made of paper and over a hundred and fifty feet long, was set up outside the Forbidden City on a large empty space adjoining the Coal Hill. It was crowded with figures of attendant eunuchs and handmaidens, and contained furniture and viands for the use of the illustrious dead in the lower regions. A throne was placed in the bows, and around it were kneeling effigies of attendant officials all wearing their Robes of State as if the shade of Tzŭ Hsi were holding an audience.

On the morning of the All Souls' festival the Regent, in the name of the Emperor, performed sacrifice before the barge, which was then set alight and burnt, in order that the Old Buddha might enjoy the use of it at the "yellow springs." A day or two before her funeral, hundreds of paper effigies of attendants, cavalry, camels and other pack animals, were similarly burnt so that her spirit might

enjoy all the pomp to which she had been accustomed in life.

The following is an extract from the account of her funeral published in *The Times* of 27th November 1909:—

"The conveyance of Her Majesty's ancestral tablet from the tombs of the Eastern Hills to its resting-place in the Temple of Ancestors in the Forbidden City was a ceremony in the highest degree impressive and indicative of the vitality of those feelings which make ancestor-worship the most important factor in the life of the Chinese. The tablet, a simple strip of carved and lacquered wood, bearing the name of the deceased in Manchu and Chinese characters, had been officially present at the burial. With the closing of the great door of the tomb, the spirit of the departed ruler is supposed to be translated to the tablet, and to the latter is therefore given honour equal to that which was accorded to the sovereign during her lifetime. Borne aloft in a gorgeous chariot draped with Imperial yellow silk and attended by a large mounted escort, Tzŭ Hsi's tablet journeyed slowly and solemnly, in three days' stages, from the Eastern Hills to Peking. At each stage it rested for the night in a specially constructed pavilion, being 'invited' by the Master of the Ceremonies, on his knees and with all solemnity, to be pleased to leave its chariot and rest. For the passage of this habitation of the spirit of the mighty dead, the Imperial road had been specially prepared and swept by an army of men; it had become a *via sacra* on which no profane feet might come or go. As the procession bearing the sacred tablet drew near to the gates of the capital, the Prince Regent and all the high officers of the Court knelt reverently to receive it. All traffic was stopped; every sound stilled in the streets, where the people knelt to do homage to the memory of the Old Buddha. Slowly and solemnly the chariot was borne through the main gate of the Forbidden City to the Temple of the Dynasty's ancestors, the most sacred spot in the Empire, where it was 'invited' to take its appointed place among the nine Ancestors and their thirty-five Imperial Consorts. Before this could be done, however, it was necessary that the tablets of Tzŭ Hsi's son, T'ung-Chih, and of her daughter-in-law, should first be removed from that august assembly, because due ceremony required that the arriving tablet should perform obeisance to those of its ancestors, and it would not be fitting for the tablet of a parent to perform this ceremony in the presence of that of a son or daughter-in-law. The act of obeisance was performed by deputy, in the person of the Regent acting for the child Emperor, and consisted of nine 'ko-tows' before each tablet in the Temple, or about 400 prostrations in all. When these had

been completed, with due regard to the order of seniority of the deceased, the tablets of the Emperor T'ung-Chih and his wife were formally 'invited' to return to the Temple, where obeisance was made on their behalf to the shade of Tzŭ Hsi which had been placed in the shrine beside that of her former colleague and co-regent, the Empress Tzŭ An."

Thus ended the last ceremonial act of the life and death of this remarkable woman; but her spirit still watches over the Forbidden City and the affairs of her people, who firmly believe that it will in due time guide the nation to a happy issue out of all their afflictions. As time goes on, the weaknesses of her character and the errors of her career are forgotten, and her greatness only remembered. And no better epitaph could be written for this great Manchu than that of her own valedictory Decree which, rising above all the pettiness and humiliations of her reign, looking death and change steadfastly in the face, raises her in our eyes (to quote a writer in *The Spectator*) "to that vague ideal state of human governance imagined by the Greek, when the Kings should be philosophers and the philosophers Kings."

[1] 2nd January, 1909.

XXI

CONCLUSION

"All sweeping judgments," says Coleridge, "are unjust." *Comprendre*—says the French philosopher—*c'est tout pardonner*. To understand the life and personality of the Empress Dowager, it is before everything essential to divest our minds of racial prejudice and to endeavour to appreciate something of the environment and traditions to which she was born. In the words of the thoughtful article in *The Spectator*, already quoted, "she lived and worked and ruled in a setting which is apart from all western modes of thought and standards of action, and the first step in the historian's task is to see that she is judged by her own standards and not wholly by ours." Judged by the rough test of public opinion and accumulating evidence in her own country, Tzŭ Hsi's name will go down to history in China as that of a genius in statecraft and a born ruler, a woman "with all the courage of a man, and more than the ordinary man's intelligence." [1]

Pending that reform and liberty of the Press which is still the distant dream of "Young China," no useful record of the life and times of the Empress Dowager is to be expected from any Chinese writer. Despite the mass of information which exists in the diaries and archives of metropolitan officials and the personal reminiscences of those who knew her well, nothing of any human interest or value has been published on the subject in China. From the official and orthodox point of view, a truthful biography of the Empress would be sacrilege. It is true that in the vernacular newspapers under European protection at the Treaty Ports, as well as in Hongkong and Singapore, Cantonese writers have given impressions of Her Majesty's personality and brief accounts of her life, but these are

[1] *Vide* the Diary of Ching Shan, p. 179.

so hopelessly biassed and distorted by hatred of the Manchus as to be almost worthless for historical purposes, as worthless as the dry chronicles of the dynastic annals. Reference has already been made to the best known of these publications, a series of letters originally published in a Singapore newspaper and republished under the title of "The Chinese Crisis from Within,"[1] by a writer who, under the *nom de plume* of "Wen Ching," concealed the identity of one of K'ang Yu-wei's most ardent disciples. His work is remarkable for sustained invective and reckless inaccuracy, clearly intended to create an atmosphere of hatred against the Manchus (for the ultimate benefit of the Cantonese) in the minds of his countrymen, and to dissuade the foreign Powers from allowing the Empress to return to Peking. Drawing on a typically Babu store of "western learning," this writer compares the Empress to Circe, Semiramis, Catherine de Medici, Messalina, Fulvia, and Julia Agrippina; quoting Dante and Rossetti to enforce his arguments, and leavening his vituperation with a modicum of verifiable facts sufficient to give to his narrative something of *vraisemblance*. But his judgment is emphatically sweeping. He ignores alike Tzŭ Hsi's undeniable good qualities and her extenuating circumstances, the defects of her education and the difficulties of her position, so that his work is almost valueless.

Equally valueless, for purposes of historical accuracy, are most of the accounts and impressions of the Empress recorded by those Europeans (especially the ladies of the Diplomatic Body and their friends) who saw her personality and purposes reflected in the false light which beats upon the Dragon Throne on ceremonial occasions, or who came under the influence of the deliberate artifices and charm of manner which she assumed so well. Had the etiquette of her Court and people permitted intercourse with European diplomats and distinguished visitors of the male sex, she would certainly have acquired, and exercised over them also, that direct personal influence which emanated from her extraordinary vitality and will-power,

[1] Grant Richards, 1901.

influence such as the western world has learned to associate with the names of the Emperor William of Germany and Mr. Roosevelt. Restricted as she was to social relations with her own sex amongst foreigners, she exerted herself, and never failed, to produce on them an impression of womanly grace and gentleness of disposition, which qualities we find accordingly praised by nearly all who came in contact with her after the return of the Court, aye, even by those who had undergone the horrors of the siege under the very walls of her palace. The glamour of her mysterious Court, the rarity of the visions vouchsafed, the real charm of her manner, and the apparently artless *bonhomie* of her bearing, all combined to create in the minds of the European ladies who saw her an impression as favourable as it was opposed to every dictate of common sense and experience. In certain notable instances, the effect of this impression reacted visibly on the course of the Peace Protocol negotiations.

From the Diary of Ching Shan we obtain an estimate of Tzŭ Hsi's character, formed by one who had enjoyed for years continual opportunities of studying her at close quarters—an estimate which was, and is, confirmed by the popular verdict, the common report of the tea-houses and market places of the capital. Despite her swiftly changing and uncontrolled moods, her childish lack of moral sense, her unscrupulous love of power, her fierce passions and revenges, Tzŭ Hsi was no more the savage monster described by "Wen Ching," than she was the benevolent, fashion-plate Lady Bountiful of the American magazines. She was simply a woman of unusual courage and vitality, of strong will and unbounded ambition, a woman and an Oriental, living out her life by such lights as she knew, and in accordance with the traditions of her race and caste. Says Ching Shan in the Diary: *The nature of the Empress is peace-loving: she has seen many springs and autumns. I myself know well her refined and gentle tastes, her love of painting, poetry and the theatre. When in a good mood she is the most amiable and tractable of women, but at times her rage is awful to witness.* Here we have

the woman drawn from life, without *arrière pensée,* by a just but sympathetic observer, the woman who could win, and hold, the affectionate loyalty of the greatest men of her time, not to speak of that of her retainers and serving maids; the woman whose human interest and sympathy in everything around her were not withered by age nor staled by custom; yet who, at a word, could send the fierce leaders of the Boxers cowering from her presence. *Souvent femme varie.* Tzŭ Hsi, her own mistress and virtual ruler of the Empire at the age of twenty-four, had not had much occasion to learn to control either her moods or her passions. Hers, from the first, was the trick and temper of autocracy. Trained in the traditions of a Court where human lives count for little, where power maintains itself by pitiless and brutal methods, where treason and foul deeds lie in waiting for the first signs of the ruler's weakness, how should she learn to put away from the Forbidden City the hideous barbarities of its ways?

Let us remember her time and place. Consider the woman's environment and training, her marriage to a dissolute puppet, her subsequent life in that gilded prison of the Imperial city, with its endless formalities, base intrigues and artificial sins. Prior to the establishment of China's first diplomatic relations with European nations, the Court of Peking and its ways bore a strong resemblance to those of Medieval Europe; nor have successive routs and invasions since that date changed any of its cherished traditions and methods. In the words of a recent writer on medieval history, the life of the Peking Palace, like that of our fourteenth century, "was one of profound learning and crass stupidity, of infantile gaiety and sudden tragedy, of flashing fortunes and swift dooms. There is a certain innocence about the very sinners of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Many of their problems, indeed, arose from the fact that this same childlike candour was allied to the unworn forces of full manhood." Whatever crimes of cruelty and vengeance Tzŭ Hsi committed—and they were many—be it said to her credit that she had, as a rule, the courage of her convictions and position, and sinned

coram publico. Beneath the fierceness without which an Oriental ruler cannot hope to remain effective, there certainly beat a heart which could be kind, if the conditions were propitious, and a rough sense of humour, which is a common and pleasing trait of the Manchus.

Let us also remember that in the East to-day (as it was with us of Europe before the growth of that humanitarianism which now shows signs of unhealthy exaggeration) pain and death are part of the common, every-day risks of life, risks lightly incurred by the average Oriental in the great game of ambitions, loves, and hates that is for ever played around the Throne. Tzŭ Hsi played her royal part in the great game, but it is not recorded of her that she ever took life from sheer cruelty or love of killing. When she sent a man to death, it was because he stood between her and the full and safe gratification of her love of power. When her fierce rage was turned against the insolence of the foreigner, she had no scruple in consigning every European in China to the executioner; when the Emperor's favourite concubine disputed her Imperial authority she had no hesitation in ordering her to immediate death; but in every recorded instance, except one, her methods were swift, clean, and, from the Oriental point of view, not unmerciful. She had no liking for tortures, or the lingering death. In all her Decrees of vengeance, we find the same unhesitating firmness in removing human obstacles from her path, combined with a complete absence of that unnecessary cruelty which is so frequently associated with despotism. Her methods, in fact, were Elizabethan rather than Florentine.

If Tzŭ Hsi developed self-reliance early in life, the fact is not to be wondered at, for it was little help that she had to look for in her *entourage* of Court officials. Amongst the effete classical scholars, the fat-paunched Falstaffs, the opium sots, doddering fatalists and corrupt parasites of the Imperial Clans, she seems, indeed, to have been an anachronism, a "cast-back" to the virility and energy that won China for her sturdy ancestors. She appeared to be the born and inevitable ruler of the degenerate Dynasty,

and if she became a law unto herself, it was largely because there were few about her fit to lead or to command.

Imbued with a very feminine love of luxury, addicted to pleasure, and at one period of her life undoubtedly licentious after the manner of her Court's traditions, she combined these qualities with a shrewd common sense and a marked *penchant* for acquiring and amassing personal property. To use her own phrase, she endeavoured in all things to observe the principle of the "happy mean," and seldom allowed her love of pleasure to obscure her vision or to hinder her purposes in the serious businesses of life.

Like many great rulers of the imperious and militant type, she was remarkably superstitious, a punctilious observer of the rites prescribed for averting omens and conciliating the myriad gods and demons of the several religions of China, a liberal supporter of priests and soothsayers. Nevertheless, as with Elizabeth of England, her secular instincts were *au fond* stronger than all her superstitions. That sturdy common sense, which played so successfully upon the weaknesses and the passions of her corrupt *entourage,* never allowed any consideration for the powers unseen to interfere seriously with her masterful handling of things visible, or to curb her ruling passions for unquestioned authority.

The qualities which made up the remarkable personality of the Empress were many and complex, but of those which chiefly contributed to her popularity and power we would place, first, her courage, and next, a certain simplicity and directness—both qualities that stand out in strong relief against the timorous and tortuous tendencies of the average Manchu. Of her courage there could be no doubt; even amidst the chaos of the days of the Boxer terror it never failed her, and Ching Shan is only one of many who bear witness to her unconquerable spirit and *sang froid.* Amidst scenes of desolation and destruction that might well shake the courage of the bravest men, we see her calmly painting bamboos on silk, or giving orders to stop the bombardment of the Legations to allow of her excursion on the Lake. How powerful is the dramatic quality of that scene where

PORTRAIT OF THE EMPRESS DOWAGER.

Painted from life by Miss Catharine A. Carl for the St. Louis Exposition and now the property of the American Nation.

(*Reproduced by permission of the Artist.*)

she attacks and dominates the truculent Boxer leaders at her very doors; or again when, on the morning of the flight, she alone preserves presence of mind, and gives her orders as coolly as if starting on a picnic! At such moments all the defects of her training and temperament are forgotten in the irresistible appeal of her nobler qualities.

Of those qualities, and of her divine right to rule, Tzŭ Hsi herself was fully convinced, and no less determined than His Majesty of Germany, to insist upon proper recognition and respect for herself and her commanding place in the scheme of the universe. Her belief in her own supreme importance, and her superstitious habit of thought were both strikingly displayed on the occasion when her portrait, painted by Miss Carl for the St. Louis Exposition, was taken from the Waiwupu on its departure to the United States. She regarded this presentment of her august person as entitled, in all seriousness of ceremonial, to the same reverence as herself, and gave orders for the construction of a miniature railway, to be built through the streets of the capital for its special benefit. By this means the "sacred countenance" was carried upright, under its canopy of yellow silk, and Her Majesty was spared the thought of being borne in effigy on the shoulders of coolies —a form of progress too suggestively ill-omened to be endured. Before the portrait left the palace, the Emperor was summoned to prostrate himself before it, and at its passing through the city, and along the railway line, the people humbly knelt, as if it had been the Old Buddha of flesh and blood. Incidents of this kind emphasise the impossibility of fairly judging the Empress by European standards of conduct and ideas. To get something of the proper atmosphere and perspective, we must go back to the early days of the Tudors.

Blunt of speech herself, she was quick to detect and resent flattery. Those who rose highest in her affection and regard were essentially strong men, blunt outspoken officials of the type of Jung Lu, Tseng Kuo-fan, and Tso Tsung-t'ang; for those who would win her favour by

sycophancy she had a profound contempt, which she was at no pains to conceal, though in certain instances (*e. g.* Chang Chih-tung) she overlooked the offence because of ripe scholarship or courage.

As was only natural, Tzŭ Hsi was not above favouring her own people, the Manchus, but one great secret of the solidity of her rule undoubtedly lay in her broad impartiality and the nice balance which she maintained between Chinese and Manchus in all departments of the Government. She had realised that the brains and energy of the country must come from the Chinese, and that if the Manchus were to retain their power and sinecure positions, it must be with the good will of the Chinese and the loyalty of the Mandarin class in the provinces. From the commencement of her rule, down to the day when she handed over her Boxer kinsmen to the executioner, she never hesitated to inflict impartial punishment on Manchus, when public opinion was against them. A case in point occurred in 1863, in connection with one of her favourite generals, named Sheng Pao, who had gained her sincere gratitude by his share in the war against the British and French invaders in 1860, and who, by luck and the ignorance of the Court, had been credited with having stopped the advance of the Allies to Jehol. For these alleged services she had awarded him special thanks and high honour. In 1863, however, he was engaged in Shensi, fighting the Taipings, and, following a custom not unusual amongst Chinese military commanders, had asked leave to win over one of the rebel leaders by giving him an important official position. Tzŭ Hsi, who had had ample opportunities to learn something of the danger of this procedure, declined to sanction his request, pointing out the objections thereto. Sheng Pao ventured to suppress her Decree, and gave the rebel the position in question. Success might have justified him, but the ex-bandit justified Tzŭ Hsi by going back on his word. Awaiting a good opportunity, he raised once more the standard of revolt, massacred a number of officials, and captured several important towns. General

Sheng Pao was arrested and brought in custody to Peking; under cross-examination he confessed, amongst other misdemeanours, that he had permitted women to accompany the troops during this campaign, which, by Chinese military law, is a capital offence. Other charges against him, however, he denied, and, preserving an insolent attitude, demanded to be confronted with his accusers. Tzŭ Hsi issued a characteristically vigorous Decree in which she declared that the proper punishment for his offence was decapitation, but inasmuch as he had acquired merit by good work against the Taipings, as well as against the British and French invaders, she graciously granted him the privilege of committing suicide, of which he promptly availed himself.

Tzŭ Hsi, as we have said, was extremely superstitious; nor is this matter for wonder when we bear in mind the medieval atmosphere of wizardous necromancy and familiar spirits which she had perforce absorbed with her earliest education. Following the precepts of Confucius, she preserved always a broad and tolerant attitude on all questions of religion, but, while reluctant to discuss things appertaining to the unknown gods, she was always prepared to conciliate them, and to allow her actions in everyday affairs to be guided by the words of her wise men and astrologers: "by dreams, and by Urim and by prophets." Thus we find her in the first year of the Regency of her son's minority (1861) issuing, in his name, a Decree, which carries back the mind irresistibly to Babylon and those days when the magicians and soothsayers were high personages in the State.

"During the night of the 15th of the 7th Moon," it begins, "there occurred a flight of shooting stars in the southern hemisphere; ten days later, a comet appeared twice in the sky to the north-west. Heaven sends not these warnings in vain. For the last month Peking has been visited by a grievous epidemic, whereof the continued severity fills us with sore dismay. The Empresses Dowager have now warned us that these portents of Heaven are sent because of serious wrong in our system of government, of errors unreformed and grievances unredressed,"

and the Decree ends by exhorting all concerned "to put away frivolous things, so that Heaven, perceiving our reverent attitude, may relent."

In previous chapters we have shown with what punctilious attention she consulted her astrologers in regard to the propitious day for re-entering her capital on the Court's return from exile, her anxiety for scrupulous observance of their advice being manifestly sincere. In her concern for omens and portents she seemed, like Napoleon, to obey instincts external and superior to another and very practical side of her nature, which, however, asserted itself unmistakably whenever vital issues were at stake and her supreme authority threatened. She was at all times anxious to secure the good will of the ancestral spirits, whose presence she apprehended as a living reality; but even with these, when it came to a direct issue between her own despotic authority and their claims to consideration, she never hesitated to relegate the mighty dead to the background, content to appease them in due season by suitable expressions of reverence and regret. The most notable instance of this kind occurred when, disregarding the Dynastic laws of succession, she deprived her son, the Emperor T'ung-Chih, of the rites of ancestral worship, committing thus a crime which, as she well knew, was heinous in the eyes of the Chinese people.

Her superstitious tendencies were most remarkably displayed in the matter of the selection of the site of her tomb and its building, an occasion of which the Court geomancers took full advantage. When T'ung-Chih reached his majority, in 1873, his first duty was to escort the Empresses Dowager to the Eastern Mausolea, where, with much solemnity, two auspicious sites, encircled by hills and watered by streams, were selected and exorcised of all evil influences. Further ceremonies and mystic calculations were required to determine the auspicious dates for the commencement of building operations; in these, and the adornment of the tomb, Tzŭ Hsi continued to take the keenest interest until the day of her death. In order to secure scrupulous regard for its construction in accordance

with the requirements of her horoscope, and to make her sepulchre a fitting and all-hallowed resting-place, she entrusted its chief supervision to Jung Lu, who thus secured a permanent post highly coveted by Manchu officials, in which huge "squeezes" were a matter of precedent. The geomantic conditions of these burial-places gave unusual trouble, the tomb of the Empress Tzŭ An having eventually to be shifted fifteen feet two inches northwards, and four feet seven and a half inches westwards, before the spirits of her ancestors were perfectly satisfied, while that of Tzŭ Hsi was removed seven feet four inches to the north and eight inches to the eastward.

Tzŭ Hsi feared no man. From the first moment of her power, secure in the sense of divine right and firmly believing in her "star," she savoured her authority like a rich wine. The pleasure she derived from delivering homilies to the highest officials in the Empire may be read between the lines of her Decrees. Already in 1862—that is to say before she was twenty-seven years of age—we find her solemnly admonishing the Grand Council on their duties, urging them to adopt stricter standards of conduct, and to put a check on their corrupt tendencies. "They are, of course, not debarred from seeking advice from persons below them in society, but let them be careful to avoid any attempt at forming cabals or attracting to themselves troops of followers." And on another occasion, when she specially invited the Censors to impeach Prince Kung, she observed: "In discussing the principles of just government you should remember the precept of the Confucian school, which is, 'Be not weary in well-doing : strict rectitude of conduct is the road royal to good government. Face and overcome your difficulties, and thus eventually earn the right to ease.'" Tzŭ Hsi could turn out this sort of thing, which appeals to every Chinese scholar, in good style and large quantities. She took pride in the manufacture of maxims for the guidance of the Mandarins, but there was always a suspicion that her tongue was in her cheek while she carefully penned these copybook platitudes, just as we know there was when she set herself to display what *The*

Times correspondent at Peking called her "girlish abandon," in order to regain the affection of Mrs. Conger and the ladies of the Diplomatic Body.

Of the Empress Dowager's popularity and prestige with all classes of her subjects there is no doubt. At Peking especially, and throughout the metropolitan province, she was the object of a very general and very sincere affection; seldom is her name spoken except with expressions of admiration and regard, very similar in effect to the feelings of the British people for Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Although her share of responsibility for the Boxer rising, and for the consequent sufferings inflicted on the people, was matter of common knowledge, little or no blame was ever imputed to the Old Buddha. Her subjects loved her for her very defects, for the foolhardy courage that had staked the Empire on a throw. Amongst the lower classes it was the general opinion that she had done her best, and with the best intentions. The scheme itself was magnificent —to drive the foreigner into the sea—and it appealed to her people as worthy of their ruler and of a better fate. If it had failed for this time, it was the will of Heaven, and no doubt at some future date success would justify her wisdom. If they blamed her at all, it was for condescending to intimate relations with the hated foreigner after the Court's return to Peking; but even in this she had the sympathy rather than the censure of her subjects.

To the great mass of her people, who had never seen her, but knew her only by cumulative weight of common report, the Old Buddha stood for the embodiment of courage, liberality and kindness of heart. If, as they knew, she were subject to fierce outbursts of sudden rage, the fact did her no injury in the eyes of a race which believes that wrath-matter undischarged is a virulent poison in the system. The simple Chihli folk made allowance, not without its sense of humour, for their august sovereign's capacity to generate wrath-matter, as for her feminine mutability: to them she was a great ruler and a *bon enfant.* In a country where merciless officials and torture are part of the long-accepted order of things, no more stress was laid on

her numerous acts of cold-blooded tyranny than, shall we say, was laid on the beheading of earls at the close of the fifteenth century in England.

One of the writers had the good fortune once to see the Empress when proceeding in her palanquin to the Eastern tombs. She had breakfasted early at the Tung Yueh Temple outside the Ch'i Hua gate, and was on her way to T'ung Chou. As her chair passed along a line of kneeling peasantry, the curtains were open and it was seen that the Old Buddha was asleep. The good country-people were delighted. "Look," they cried, "the Old Buddha is sleeping. Really, she has far too much work to do! A rare woman—what a pleasure to see her thus!"

Tzŭ Hsi was recognised to be above criticism and above the laws which she rigorously enforced on others. For instance, when, a few weeks after the issue of a Decree prohibiting corporal punishment and torture in prisons, she caused the Reformer Shen Chin to be flogged to death (July 1904), public opinion saw nothing extraordinary in the event. A few days later, when preparations were being made for the celebration of her seventieth birthday, she issued another Decree, declining the honorific title dutifully proffered by the Emperor, together with its emoluments, on the ground that she had no heart for festivities, "being profoundly distressed at the thought of the sufferings of my subjects in Manchuria, owing to the destruction wrought there by the Russian and Japanese armies. My one desire," she added, "is that my officials may co-operate to introduce more humane methods of Government, so that my people may live to enjoy good old age, resting on couches of comfortable ease. This is the best way to honour the seventieth anniversary of my birth." No doubt the shade of Shen Chin was duly appeased.

Of her vindictive ferocity on occasions there can be no question. As Ching Shan admits, even her most faithful admirers and servants were aware that at moments of her wrath it was prudent to be out of her reach, or, if unavoidably present, to abstain from thwarting her. They knew that those who dared to question her absolute authority, or

to criticise the means by which she gained and retained it, need look for no mercy. But they knew also that for faithful service and loyalty she had a royal memory and, like Catherine of Russia, she never forgot her friends.

Her unpopularity in central and southern China, which became marked after the war with Japan and violent at the time of the *coup d'état*, was in its origin anti-dynastic and political. It was particularly strong in Kuang-tung, where for years Her Majesty was denounced by agitators as a monster of unparalleled depravity. The political opinions of the turbulent and quick-witted Cantonese have generally been expressed in a lively and somewhat ribald form, and when we bear in mind the popular tendency (not confined to the Far East) of ascribing gross immorality to crowned heads, we are justified in refusing to attach undue importance to the wild accusations levelled against the Empress Dowager in this quarter. The utterances of the hotspurs and lampooners of Southern China are chiefly interesting in that they reveal something of the vast possibilities of cleavage inherent in the Chinese Government system, and prove the Manchu rule to have fallen into something like contempt in that region where the new forces of education and political activity are most conspicuous.

These, however, are but local manifestations, and they lost much of their inspiration after the *coup d'état*. The anti-dynastic tendencies noticeable in the vernacular Press of Shanghai, many of which assumed the form of personal hostility to the Empress, were also little more than the local result of Young China's vague aspirations and desire for change, and reflected little weight of serious opinion. The official class and the *literati* as a whole were loyal to Her Majesty and regarded her with respect. They did not fail to express admiration of her wisdom and statecraft, which kept the Empire together under circumstances of great difficulty. To her selection and support of Tseng Kuo-fan they generally attributed China's recovery from the disasters of the Taiping rebellion, and to her sagacity in 1898 they ascribed the country's escape from dangers of sudden revolution. They admitted that had it not been for

her masterly handling of the Tsai Yüan conspiracy (1860–61), it is doubtful whether the Dynasty could have held together for a decade, and they realised, when her strong hand no longer grasped the helm, that the ship of State was likely to drift into dangerous waters.

The everyday routine of Tzŭ Hsi's life has been well described in Miss Carl's accurate and picturesque account of the palace ceremonial and amusements,[1] the first authoritative picture of *la vie intime* of the Chinese Court. Apart from a keen natural aptitude for State affairs (similar to that of Queen Victoria, whom she greatly admired from afar), Tzŭ Hsi maintained to the end of her days a lively interest in literature and art, together with a healthy and catholic appetite for amusement. She had an inveterate love for the theatre, for masques and pageants, which she indulged at all times and places, taking a professional interest in the players and giving much advice about the performances, which she selected daily from a list submitted to her. It was a matter of comment, and some hostile criticism by Censors, that even during the sojourn of the Court in the provincial wilderness at Hsi-an, she summoned actors to follow the Court and perform as usual.

Her private life had, no doubt, its phases. Of its details we know but little prior to the period of the restoration of the Summer Palace in the early 'nineties. In middle age, however, when she had assimilated the philosophy and practice of the "happy mean," her tastes became simple and her habits regular. She was passionately fond of the Summer Palace, of its gardens and the lake amongst the hills, and towards the end of her life went as seldom as possible into the city. She loved the freedom of the I-ho Yüan, its absence of formal etiquette, her water-picnics and the familiar intercourse of her favourite ladies, with whom she would discuss the day's news and the gossip of the Imperial Clans. With these, especially with the wife of Jung Lu and the Princess Imperial, she would talk endlessly of old times and make plans for the future.

[1] *With the Empress Dowager of China.* Eveleigh Nash, 1906.

Her love of literature and profound knowledge of history did much to win for her the respect of the Mandarin class, with whom the classics are a religion. In her reading she was, however, broad-minded, not to say omnivorous; it was her custom to spend a certain time daily in having ancient and modern authors read aloud by eunuchs specially trained in elocution. She believed thoroughly in education, though realising clearly the danger of putting new wine into old skins ; and she perceived towards the end of her life that the rapidly changing conditions of the Empire had rendered the wisdom of China's Sages of little practical value as a basis of administration. Her clearness of perception on this point, contrasted with her action in 1898, is indeed remarkable, but it should be remembered that much of her opposition to the Emperor's policy of Reform was the result of personal pique and outraged dignity, as in the case of her decision to become a Boxer leader in 1900.

Frequent reference has been made in previous chapters to the extravagance and licentious display of Tzŭ Hsi's Court during the years of the first Regency. The remonstrances of the Censors on the subject were so numerous and outspoken, so circumstantial in their charges, as to leave little room for doubt that the Empress deserved their indignant condemnation. All the records of that period, and particularly from 1862 to 1869, point to the evil and steadily increasing influence of the eunuchs, whose corruption and encouragement of lavish expenditure resulted in continual demands on the provincial exchequers. But even at the height of what may fairly be called her riotous living, Tzŭ Hsi always had the good grace to concur publicly in the virtuous suggestions of her monitors, and to conciliate public opinion by professions of a strong desire for economy. She would have her Imperial way, her splendid pageants and garnered wealth of tribute, but the Censors should have their "face." On the occasion of the Emperor T'ung-Chih's wedding in 1869, when the Grand Council had solemnly deprecated any increase in her palace expenditure because of the impoverished state of the

people brought about by the Taiping Rebellion, she issued a Decree stating that "so great was her perturbation of mind at the prevalent sufferings of her people, that she grudged even the money spent on the inferior raiment she was wearing, and the humble fare that was served at her palace table." She was, in fact, as lavish of good principles as of the public funds. But it is to be remembered that a large proportion of the vast sums spent on her palaces, on the building of her tomb, and on her Court festivities, represents the "squeezes" of officials and eunuchs, which, however solemnly the Grand Council might denounce extravagance, are in practice universally recognised as inseparable from the Celestial system of government. Tzŭ Hsi was fully aware that much of the enormous expenditure charged to her Privy Purse went in "squeeze," but she good-humouredly acquiesced in a custom as deeply ingrained in the Chinese as ancestral worship, and from which she herself derived no small profit. At her receptions to the ladies of the Diplomatic Body she would frequently enquire as to the market prices of household commodities, in order, as she cheerfully explained, to be able to show her chief eunuch that she was aware of his monstrous overcharges.

Combined, however, with her love of sumptuous display and occasional fits of Imperial munificence, Tzŭ Hsi possessed a certain housewifely instinct of thrift which, with advancing age, verged on parsimony. The Privy Purse of China's ruler is not dependent upon any well-defined civil list, but rather upon the exigences of the day, upon the harvests and trade of the Empire, whence, through percentages of "squeezes" levied by the provincial authorities, come the funds required to defray the expenses of the Court.[1] The uncertainty of these remittances partly explains the Empress Dowager's hoarding tendencies, that squirrel instinct which impelled her to bury large sums in the vaults of the palace and to accumulate a vast store

[1] Since the days of the Emperor Ch'ien-Lung, these expenses averaged some forty millions of taels per annum. Vide *The Times*, special article, 7th December, 1909.

of silks, medicines, clocks, and all manner of valuables in the Forbidden City. At the time of her death her private fortune, including a large number of gold Buddhas and sacrificial vessels stored in the palace vaults, was estimated by a high official of the Court at about sixteen millions sterling. The estimate is necessarily a loose one, being Chinese, but it was known with tolerable certainty that the hoard of gold [1] buried in the Ning-Shou Palace at the time of the Court's flight in 1900, amounted to sixty millions of taels (say, eight millions sterling), and the "tribute" paid by the provinces to the Court at T'ai-yüan and Hsi-an would amount to as much more.

Tsŭ Hsi was proud of her personal appearance, and justly so, for she retained until advanced old age a clear complexion and youthful features. [To an artist who painted her portrait not long before her death she expressed a wish that her wrinkles should be left out.] By no means free from feminine vanity, she devoted a considerable amount of time each day to her toilet, and was particularly careful about the dressing of her hair. At the supreme moment of the Court's flight from the palace, in 1900, she was heard to complain bitterly at being compelled to adopt the Chinese fashion of head-dress.

Her good health and vitality were always extraordinary. She herself attributed them chiefly to early rising, regular habits, and the frequent consumption of milk, which she usually took curdled in the form of a kind of rennet. She ate frugally but well, being an epicure at heart and delighting in dainty and *recherché* menus. Opium, like other luxuries, she took in strict moderation, but greatly enjoyed her pipe after the business of the day was done. It was her practice then to rest for an hour, smoking at intervals, a *siesta* which the Court knew better than to disturb. She fully realised the evils wrought by abuse of the insidious drug, and approved of the laws, introduced by the initiative of T'ang Shao-yi and other high officials, for its abolition. But her fellow-feeling for those who, like herself, could use

[1] The nucleus of this hoard was the money confiscated from the usurping Regent Su Shun in 1861.

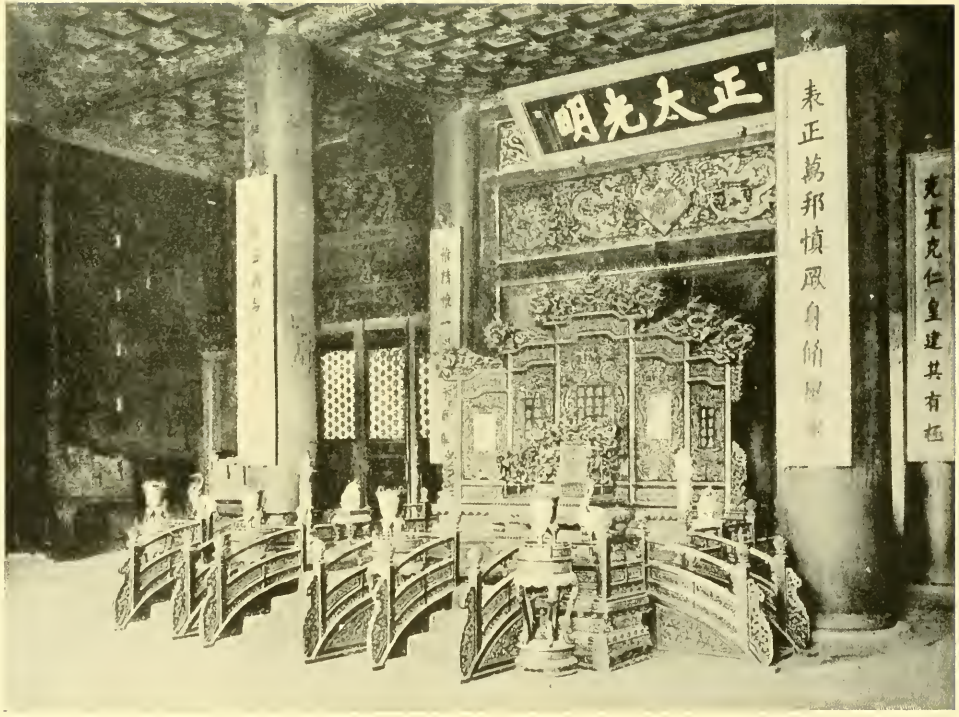
it in moderation, and her experience of its soothing and stimulating effect on the mind, led her to insist that the Abolition Decree (November 22nd, 1906) should not deprive persons over sixty years of age of their accustomed solace. She was, in fact, willing to decree prohibition for the masses, but lenient to herself and to those who had sufficiently proved their capacity to follow the path of the happy mean.

Such was Tzŭ Hsi, a woman whose wonderful personality and career cannot fail to secure for her a place amongst the rulers who have become the standards and pivots of greatness in the world's history. The marvellous success of her career and the passionate devotion of her partisans are not to be easily explained by any ordinary process of analysis or comparison ; but there is no doubt that they were chiefly due to that mysterious and indefinable quality which is called "charm," a quality apparently independent alike of morals, ethics, education, and what we call civilisation ; universal in its appeal, irresistible in its effect upon the great majority of mankind. It was this personal charm of the woman, combined with her intense vitality and accessibility, that won for her respect, and often affection, even from those who had good reason to deplore her methods and deny her principles. This personal charm, this subtle and magnetic emanation, was undoubtedly the secret of that stupendous power with which, for good or evil, she ruled for half a century a third of the population of the earth ; that charm it was that won to her side the bravest and best of China's picked men, and it is the lingering memory and tradition of that charm which already invest the name of the Old Buddha with attributes of legendary virtue and superhuman wisdom.

Europeans, studying the many complex and unexpected phases of her extraordinary personality from the point of view of western moralities, have usually emphasised and denounced her cold-blooded ferocity and homicidal rage. Without denying the facts, or extenuating her guilt, it must, nevertheless, be admitted that it would be unjust to

expect from her compliance with standards of morals and conduct of which she was perforce ignorant; and that, judged by the standards of her own predecessors and contemporaries, and by the verdict of her subjects, she is not to be reckoned a wicked woman. Let it be remembered also that within comparatively recent periods of British history, death was dealt out with no niggard or gentle hand to further the alleged interests of the State; men were hanged, drawn and quartered in the days of Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, gentle ladies both, and averse to the spilling of blood, for the greater glory of Thrones, and in the defence of the Christian religion.

Tzŭ Hsi died as she had lived, keen to the last, impatient of the bonds of sickness that kept her from the new day's work, hopeful ever for the future. Unto the last her thoughts were of the Empire, of that new plan of Constitutional Government wherein she had come to see visions of a new and glorious era for China and for herself. And when the end came, she faced it, as she had faced life, with a stout heart and brave words, going out to meet the Unknown as if she were but starting for a summer picnic. Reluctantly she bade farewell to the world of men, to the life she had lived with so keen a zest ; but, unlike England's Tudor Queen, she bowed gracefully to the inevitable, leaving the scene with steadfast and Imperial dignity, confident in her high destinies to come.



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THE IMPERIAL DAIS IN THE CH'IEN CH'ING HALL.

INDEX

Actors, Palace, 56
Admiralty, *vide* Navy.
Adviser to the Government, *vide* Prince Kung, also Prince Ch'un.
Adviser to the Regency, *vide* Prince Ch'un.
Aisin Gioros, *vide* "Imperial Clansmen."
A-Lu-Te, Empress (Chia Shun), 75–8, 80–3, suicide of, 85
Ancestor worship, 5, 78, 101–2, 288–9
Ancestral tablet, 295–6
An Te-hai (chief eunuch), 33, 55, 57–9; arrest and execution, 59, 60
An Wei-ch'un (censor), 116–17
Army, 138, 163; law *re* women in camp, 305
Astrologers and Astronomers, 30, 74
Audiences, Procedure at, *vide* Ceremonies.

"Benign Countenance," 42
Berlin, Mission to, 238–41
Big Sword Society, 169
Birthday celebrations, 112–14, 281
Black List (1900), 52
Board of Regents, 33
Board of Rites, 128–30
Boxer Movement, 171–8; burning of foreign quarters at Peking, 176–7; some causes, 114, 244–6; execution of Boxer chiefs, 195; lesson of, 261; Li Lien-ying's influence on, 67–8; mystic evolutions and magic rites, 172, 175, 192; protection for foreigners, 176, 178, 185; Tzŭ Hsi's attitude towards, 181, 186–7, 231, 259; victims, 185, 192–4, 198, 207
British Minister, 148–9, 156
Brooks, Rev., 169 *note*
Bruce, Sir F., 22
Burial Ceremonies, *vide* Ceremonies.

Caligraphy, Edict *re*, 131
Carl, Miss, 311
Censorate, 31, 78; protest against selection of Heir, 85; remonstrance to Tzŭ Hsi, 106, 111, 312; attack on Li Hung-chang, 116; on Education reform, 128–9
Ceremonies, audiences, 46, 80, 120, 146, 168, 225; before ancestral tablet, 295–6; burial, 14, 15, 17, 92; Dalai Lama, special ceremony, 281–2; death and funeral, 34–7, 48–9, 111, 287, 292–93; sacrifice to tutelary deities, 23; visit of Tzŭ Hsi to parents, 9, 10
Chang Chih-tung, 151; character, 191; abolition of examination system, 265
Chang Te-ch'eng, 193
Chang Yin-huan, 125, 137; imprisonment, 151 *note*; banishment, 156
Chao, Duke, 6
Chao Shu-ch'iao, 182, 209
Cheng, Prince, *vide* Tuan Hua.
Ch'en Pao-chen, 123, 132
Ch'en Tu-en, 41
Chia Shun, Empress, *vide* A-Lu-Te.
Chia To, 56
Chia Yi (quoted), 201–2
Ch'ien Lung, Emperor, 101
Ch'i Hsiu, 178, 180
China, location of new capital of, discussed, 246–7
Ch'ing, Prince, 171, 284; attitude towards Boxers, 178, 184; peace negotiations, 219, 239, 249; reception of Tzŭ Hsi at Peking, 251–2; as custodian of mausolea, 283 *and note*
Ching Hsin, 166
Ching Shan, 166–7; extracts from diary, 167–216; death, 214
Ching Yüan-shan, 150
Chi Shou-ch'ing, 169
Chiu Min, 58 *note*
Ch'i Ying, 11–12
Chou Dynasty, 16; and eunuch system, 52
Chou Tsu-p'ei, 36
Christianity, converts assured protection, 246
Christians, massacre of, 194
Chuang, Prince, Commander-in-Chief of Boxers, 183; massacre of Christians, 194; in disgrace, 195
Ch'un, House of, 4
Ch'un, Prince (Regent), 4, 79, 278; infant son nominated Heir, 81–2, 272;

Adviser to the Empresses Regent, 86; mission to Berlin, 238–41; appointed Regent, 289–91
Chun, Prince (the first), 4, 5, 274; head of Admiralty Board, 65; Adviser to Grand Council, 106, 107; illness and death, 111; funeral ceremonies, 112
Ch'ung Ch'i, 245
Clan Imperial, *vide* Imperial Clansmen.
Classical Essays, 125, 161
"Cobbler's Wax" Li, *vide* Li Lienyin.
"Cold Palace," 28
Colleges, 132
Confucius, 53, 200, 305, 307
Conservative Party, 128 *et seq.*
Conspiracy of Regents, *vide* Tsai Yuan.
Corea, 115, 116
Council, Grand, *vide* Grand Council.
Court Ceremonies, *vide* Ceremonies.
Court in exile, 224–232; return to Peking, 242–57
Court physicians, 277, 284

Dalai Lama, visit to Peking, 275, 279, 281–2; miraculous image, 282–3
Decrees: (1860–65), 21–5, 43, 49, 56–7, 305; *re* Army reform, 135, 163; *re* Boxers, 235; cancels Boxer edicts, 235; constitutional government, 267–8; conversion to Reform, 262–3; classical examination system, 161, 265; *re* Censor An Wei-chun, 116–117; *re* Chinese and Manchus, 263–4; dismissal of Prince Kung, 47; *re* execution of all foreigners, 199; expiatory, 245; Foreign Ministers' audiences, 250; *re* Heir Apparent, 214–15; *re* Imperial Succession, 288, 289; *re* Jung Lu, 249, 270–1; *re* Kang Yu-wei, 139, 165; *re* Kuang Hsü's illness, 149; Kuang Hsü's valedictory, 286, 287; *re* lawsuits, 162, 266; *re* Opium traffic, 265; *re* Pearl concubine, 253; penitential, 235–6, 245, 257; position of Emperor's father, 106–8; *re* P'u Yi, 288–9; Reform Edicts, 128–35; Regency, 290; return to Peking, 231; Tung Chih's majority, 74; Tung Chih's illness, 77; Tzŭ Hsi's sixtieth birthday, 113–14; Tzŭ Hsi's policy, 158; Tzŭ Hsi's valedictory, 293
Diplomatic Body, 167, 178–9, 181, 183
Du Chaylard, 181

Edicts, *vide* Decrees.
Educational Reform, 264–5, 283
Elephant, Tzŭ Hsi's, 281
Elgin, Lord, 11, 21–2
Empress Consort (Tzŭ An), *vide* Tzŭ An.
Empress Dowager, *vide* Tzŭ Hsi and Yehonala.
Empress Dowager, widow of Kuang Hsü (Lung Yü), 4, 118, 144, 253, 275, 290–1
Empress Grand Dowager, *vide* Tzŭ Hsi.
Empress of the East, *vide* Tzŭ An.
Empress of the West, *vide* Tzŭ Hsi.
En Hai, 184, 215–16
En Ming, En Ch'u, En Ch'un, En Lin, sons of Ching Shan, 167–216
Etiquette, *vide* Ceremonies.
Eunuch system, 51–2, 54 *note*; influence of, on Ming Dynasty, 292; power of, 53, 234; present position, 73; regulations for, 53
Examination system, caligraphy, 131; reform of, 128–9; reforms abolished, 160–1

Flight of Court to Jehol, 23–5; from Peking, 209–13, 217–24
Foot-binding, Edict *re*, 264
French Cathedral, Peking, 177, 189, 200

Gazettes, official, 131, 139
German Emperor, reception of Prince Chun, 239–40
German Minister, *vide* Ketteler, Baron von.
Gordon, General, 10
Government Gazette, *vide* Gazettes, official.
Grand Council, 24, 80–2, 84, 141–2, 179, 284; admonished by Tzŭ Hsi, 307; appointment of adviser, 106–8; dismissal of, 105
Gros, Baron, 22–5

Han Dynasty, 41, 172
Han Yi-li, 193
Heir Apparent (Ta-a-Ko, Heng Chih), 170, 193–4; appointment of, 195; description, 233–4, 236; deposed, 237; at Hsi-an-fu, 229; stories of, 201, 225
Heng-Ching, *vide* Heir Apparent.
Ho Shen, 38
Hsi-an-fu, Court at, 228–30
Hsien-Feng (Emperor), 2, 8; burial, 33, 48–9; character, 11; confirmation of Peace Treaty, 25; death, 30, 33; at Jehol, 18; nuptial edict, 8; tomb, 49
Hsüan T'ung (P'u Yi, Child Emperor), 4, 5; nominated Heir, 285–6, 288–9

Hsü Chih-cheng, 205–6
Hsü Chi-ching, 151 *note*
Hsü Shih-ch'ang, 6
Hsü T'ung, 121–2, 177, 183; peace negotiations, 245; suicide, 213
Hsü Ying-K'uei, 128–30, 141, 159; plot against, 137
Hsu Yung-yi, 207-8
Huai Ta-pu, 130, 137, 141
Hui Chang, 157
Hui Cheng (Tzŭ Hsi's father), 1–3
Hundred Days' Reform, 128–35

I-Ho Yüan, *vide* Summer Palace.
Imperial Clansmen, 3–5, 301; Grand Council Meeting, 181; influence of, 274; opposition to reforms, 268; and question of succession, 78; and Tzŭ Hsi, 46, 146, 268
Imperial concubines, 8–9
Imperial Succession, *vide* Succession Imperial.
Iron-capped princes, 2, 5

Jade Emperor, 172 *and note;* Duke Lan's vision, 184
James, Professor, 185
Japan, war with, 113–14; cause of disasters, 66; Peace Treaty, 117
Jehol, Court at, 25 *et seq.*
Judicial Reforms, 262
Jung Lu, an appreciation of, 152–3; and Eunuch An Te-hai, 55; and Legations 178, 185, 193, 196, 199–203; and Li Lien Ying, 71; and plot against Tzŭ Hsi, 134; and Reformers, 125, 151; and Tsai Yüan Conspiracy, 34–5; and Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan, 69; and Weng T'ung-ho, 122; assists at choice of heir to throne, 80; as statesman, 152–3; at death-bed of T'ung Chih, 77; at T'ai Yüan fu, 226; commander-in-chief, 152; death, 270; his corrupt practices, 226–7; his daughter, 119; his wife, 187 *note*; illness of, 254; in disgrace, 102–3; intimacy with Yehonala, 7–28; military reforms, 132; opposes Boxers, 152, 171–2; 180–2, 189–91, 197, 221; plot against, 137, 140; restored, 113, 249; telegram to Yangtsze Viceroys, 189–91; Tzŭ Hsi's adviser, 200–1, 208–9, 255; viceroy of Chih-li, 26; withholds artillery from Boxers, 196–8
"Ju-yi" jade, 57

K'ang Hsi, Emperor, 33, 98
Kang Yi, 119 *and note;* Boxer movement, 131, 163, 177; and Hsü T'ung, 122–4; death, 228; influence over Tzü Hsi, 163, 209; plot against, 137
K'ang Yu-wei, 2, 7, 124; denounced by Hsü Ying-k'uei, 129; flight from Peking, 138–9, 148; plot against Tzü Hsi, 126–7, 131, 137, 155
Kansuh soldiery, 176, 185, 187, 194
Kao, Taoist abbot, 275
Ketteler, Baron von, 184, 200
Kuang-Hsü, Emperor (Tsai Tien), 82–7, 100–101; and Prince Tuan, 226; arrest of, 142–3; assumes government, 109 *et seq.;* at audience, 168–9; advice on question of war, 182; British intervention on behalf of, 148–9; deposition of, 167–9; flight from Peking, 209–13; his concubines, 111; his consort, 110; Hundred Days' Reform, 128–35; illness and death, 272, 276–7, 286–7; and Li Lienying, 67, 227, 271; party in support of, 156, 159; prison life of, 146 *et seq.;* question of validity of succession, 88; return to Peking, 251
Kuang Shun, 166 *note*
Kuei Ching, 76–7
Kuei Hsiang, Duke, 6
Kuei Jen, 8
Kuei Liang, 21, 36
Kuei Pao, 76
Kung, Duke, 231
Kung, Prince (candidate for Throne), 79
Kung, Prince (son of Tao-Kuang), 4, 101, 119, 124; adviser to Government, 45; and An-Te-hai, 58–60, 61, 79; assists Yehonala against Tsai Yuan, 30 *et seq.*; at nomination of Heir to Throne, 79, 80–82; death of, 123; degraded, 47, 105–6; his daughter, Princess Imperial, 45–6; plenipotentiary, 18, 20–1, 25; reinstated, 48, 49–50, 106
K'un Hsiu, 173

Lan, Duke, *vide* Tsai Lan.
Li, Prince, 106, 119, 188–9
Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, 132, 155
Liang Hai-lou, 19
Liao Shou-heng, 119–24
Lien Yuan, 207–8
Li Hung-chang, 65; Boxer Movement, 239, 242–4; death, 249; and Japanese War, 66, 114, 116; posthumous honours, 249; Yellow River repairs, 162

Li Hung-tsao, 121
Li Lien-ying (chief eunuch), 51–2, 62, 251; and Dalai Lama, 275; and Heir Apparent, 233; and Jung Lu, 227; and Kuang Hsü, 67, 120, 143; at Zoological Gardens, 280–1; Boxer Movement, 52, 67, 173, 177; character, 63; control of Government finance, 65–6; fortune of, 64; illegal practices, 64; in disgrace, 68–9; influence over Tzŭ Hsi, 72; restoration to favour, 70, 73
Lin-Hsü, 137, 139
Li Ping-heng, 198, 204–6; suicide, 208
Li Shan, 207–8
Li Tuan-fen, 137
Liu, General, 208
Liu Kuang-ti, 137
Liu K'un-yi (viceroy), 151, 159; Boxer movement, 187–9
Lü, Empress, 41
Lu Hai-huan, 239
Lung Yü, *vide* Empress Dowager, widow of Kuang Hsü.
"Lustrous" (concubine), 111, 280

Macdonald, Sir Claude, 148
Manchus: dangers to dynasty, 263; clansmen, 1, 4; eunuch system, 53–4, 264; house law, 96–7, 272 *and note*, 292; rule in China, 1, 181–2; 310
Manchus *versus* Chinese, 122 *et seq.*, 143; 150, 156–7
Massacre of Chinese Christians, 194
Ma Yu-K'un, General, 213, 220
Memorials—
An-Wei-chun, 116
Censorate, 111, 215–16
Hsü Ying-ku'ei, 128–9
Hui Chang 157
Jung Lu, 200–1
Li Hung-chang, 243
Prince Chun, 86, 239–40
re Eunuchs, 56, 59–60
Southern Viceroys, 190–1
Wu K'o-tu, 90–4, 95–8
Yüan Ch'ang and Hsü Ching-ch'eng, 194, 204
Yü Lu, Viceroy, 200
Militia train-bands, 163
Ming Dynasty, 1, 96; and Eunuch system, 51, 292
Muyanga, 2, 8
Mu Yin, 22

Na, Prince, 213
Na, Tung, 178
Navy, 65–6
Ninhulu, 6
North and South factions, 120–3 188–9
Nurhachi, 1, 264

Ocean Terrace, 142
Official Gazettes, *see* Gazettes.
Old Buddha, *vide* Tzŭ Hsi.
Opium-smoking, 265, 314–15

Parkes, Sir Harry, 15, 19, 184
"Patriotic Harmony," 167
Peace: negotiations, 230, 247–50, 299; protocol signed, 238
"Pearl" (concubine), 111, 143–4; fate of, 210; posthumous honours, 253
Peking (1860), 15–20; (1900) bombardment, 198, 209, 220; effect of Peace protocol on, 238; Legations bombarded by Boxers, 176–7, 196, 200, 203; reinforcements for Legations, 68, 171–2, 174–5, 194
P'in, 8
Po Chun, 26–7
Police (Peking), 6
Posts and Communications, 266
Press: foreign, 268; vernacular, 258, 297–8, 310; quoted, 268–9
Princess Imperial, 45, 119, 253, 311
Progressives, 130 *et seq.*
P'u Lun, Prince, 4, 285
P'u Yi, *vide* Hsuan T'ung.

Red Girdles, *vide* Imperial Clansmen.
Reform Decrees of Emperor Kuang Hsü, 125–6, 128–135, 138, 140; public opinion on, 147–8
Reform leaders, execution of, 154
Regency, joint, of Empresses Dowager 37–105
Regency of Tzŭ Hsi: First, 40–50; Second, 77–108; Third, 136 *et seq.*
Rewards for capture of Europeans, 22, 189, 193; proclamation, 198
Russia, 20, 123, 244

Sakota, 8, 10; burial, 48
Seal, Imperial, 29–30; 199
Seng, Prince, 13, 18–19, 25
Seng Ko Lin Ch'in, Prince, 22–3
Shansi, 228, 231
Shen Chin, 309
Sheng, General, 18, 19
Sheng Pao, 304–5
Sheng Yü, 107
Shun-Chih, Emperor, 33, 53
Smallpox, 77 *note*
Su, Prince, 213

Succession, Imperial, 78–84, 88–90, 285–6; 288–9; protest *re* 94–9
Sugiyama, Mr., 176
Suicide, patriotic, 89–99
Summer Palace (I-Ho Yuan), destruction of, 18, 230; rebuilding of, 65, 66, 109, 112–13, 311
Sun (eunuch), 71
Sun Chia-nai, 168, 232
Sung Dynasty, 96
Sung Po-lu, 128, 130, 142
Sun Yu-wen, 106
Su Shun (usurping Regent), 26–8; Tsai Yuan conspiracy, 29 *et seq.*; condemnation of, 38

Ta-a-Ko, *vide* Heir-Apparent
Ta Ching Emperors, 1
Taiping Rebellion, 10–11, 13, 313
Tai-Tsung, Empress, 33
Taku Forts, 13, 194
T'an Chung-lin, 165
T'ang Shao-yi, 52
T'an Ssu-t'ung, 137, 165
Tao-Kuang, Emperor, 2, 4; nuptial edict, 8; death, 10
T'ao Mo (viceroy), 73
Tientsin, 194, 201–2
Tien-T'sung, Emperor, 1
Times, *The*, quoted 295–6
Times Correspondent, interview with Li Hung-chang, 244
Ting, Admiral, 66
Ting Pao-chen, 59
Train-bands, patriotic, 170
Treaty of Commerce, 22, 25
Tribute, Provincial, 58, 70–72
Tsai Ch'u, Prince, 146–7
Tsai Feng, *vide* Chun, Prince.
Tsai Lan, Duke, 166–7, 186; and Boxers, 68, 176–7, 183–4, 209
Tsai Tien, *vide* Kuang-Hsü.
Tsai Tsê, Duke, 267
Tsai Yuan, 3, 31; conspiracy, 26 *et seq.*; arrest of, 36
Ts'en Ch'un-hsüan, 69–70, 223–4
Tsêng, Marquis, 65
Tseng Ho, 159
Tseng Kuo-fan, 3, 24, 32, 310
Tsung-li Yamên, 169, 183
Tso Tsung-t'ang, 94
Ts'ui (eunuch), 70
Tuan, Prince (Boxer), 45, 169; Boxer movement, 171–2, 178, 207–8; and Li Lien Ying, 67; forged document, 202; Imperial seal, 199; in disgrace, 195, 202–3; relations with Tzŭ Hsi, 213, 220; son of, Heir Apparent, 168
Tuan Fang, 291
Tuan Hua, Prince, 26, 39
Tun, Prince, 2, 87
Tung Chih, Emperor, 40, 43, 72; death, 77; funeral, 89, 100; majority of, 74; succession to, 83, 284–5; unborn heir, 83; wife of, *vide* A-Lu-Te.
Tung Fu-hsiang, General, 195–6; denounces Jung Lu, 175, 197
Tung Yüan-ch'un, 33
Tzŭ An (Empress Dowager, of the East), 43–50, 81–82; and Prince Kung, 59; and Kuang-Hsü, 100; illness and death, 104; quarrels with Tzŭ Hsi, 61, 100–103
Tzŭ Hsi, Empress Dowager (*see also* Yehonala); appoints Kuang Hsü's successor, 167–8; character, 299–303; charm of manner, 315; compared with Queen Elizabeth, 108, 111, 301–2, 316; compared with Mary Stuart, 316; compared with Queen Victoria, 308, 311; compared with Catherine of Russia, 310; contemplates suicide, 208; courage, 195, 302–3, 307; death and burial, 292–5; despotic nature, 78–84; diet and habits, 229–30, 311; Empress Dowager and Co-Regent, 37 *et seq.*; extravagance, 312–13; feminine vanity, 314; fits of rage, 61, 173; flies from Peking, 209–13; 217–33; health, 314; her eunuchs, 51–73; her Privy Purse, 114, 313; her sister, 79; impartiality, 157, 249, 304; in retirement, 109–18; kindness of heart, 162; last words, 292; love of literature, 312; love of theatre, 311; names and titles, 12, 44, 290, 293–4; on Manchu rule, 181–2; opium smoking, 265, 314–15; parentage, childhood and education, 1–12; penitent, 235–7, 245–6, 272; personal appearance, 233, 314; policy towards European Powers, 250, 254–5; policy towards Manchus, 304; prestige, 294–308; quarrels with Co-Regent, 100–3; receives wives of Foreign Ministers, 148, 163, 202, 251, 254–5, 269; reform policy, 119–27, 164 (*see also* under Decrees); Regency, First (1861–73), 40–50; Second (1875–89), 77–108; Third (1898–1908), 136 *et seq.*; relations with Boxers, 177, 181, 186–7, 195, 259, 261–3; relations with Jung Lu, *vide* Jung Lu; relations with Kuang Hsü, 117–18, 167; relations with Legations, 203;

relations with Prince Kung, 32 *et seq.*, 45–50; relations with Prince Tuan, *vide* Tuan, Prince; seventy-third birthday, 281; sickness of, 275, 282–4; sixtieth birthday, 112–14; statecraft, 161–3; superstitious nature, 74, 192, 242, 248, 305–6; thrifty instincts, 314–15; tomb, 306–7; Tsai Yüan conspiracy, 26–39; unpopularity, 310; vindictiveness, 224–5; violates succession laws, 84, 272

Vernacular Press, *vide* Press.
Victoria, Queen, 275, 308

Wang Wen Shao, 209, 217, 252; account of flight from Peking, 219–22
Wan Li, Emperor, 1
Wei Chung, 53
Wen Ching, 2, 298
Weng T'ung-ho, 106, 119, 120–1, 123, 125–6; and Jung Lu, 102; Russian policy of, 121; dismissal, 159; retirement and death, 160.
Wen Hsi, 76
Wen T'i, 130, 250
Wu, Empress, 41
Wu K'o-tu, 272; memorial on question of succession, 95–9; suicide, 89
Wu Yung, 218
Yang Jui, 151, 154
Yangkunu, Prince, 1
Yang Shen-hsiu, 128, 130, 137
Yeh (viceroy), 12, 21
Yehonala (Imperial concubine), *vide* Tzŭ Hsi.
Yehonala Clan, 3, 86, 107, 291
Yellow Girdles, *vide* Imperial Clansmen.
Yellow River, 161–2
Yen-Ch'ing-chou, 218
"Yi" (concubine). *See* Yehonala.
Yi, Prince (Tsai Yuan), 22, 23
Ying Tsung, Emperor, 81
Young China, 119, 259, 268–9, 297, 310
Yüan Ch'ang, 183, 186; decapitation of, 205, 206; denounces Boxers, 194, 204
Yüan Shih-k'ai, 174, 285–6; and eunuch system, 52; birthday ceremonies, 278–9; reform policy, 136–9, 265; relations with Tzŭ Hsi, 140–1, 249; retirement, 144
Yü Hsien, 167, 169; massacre of missionaries, 199, 203, 224; suicide, 225
Yü Huang, Jade Emperor, 172, 184
Yü Lu (viceroy), 131; Boxer movement, 156, 178, 194, 200, 204; plot against, 137; suicide, 208

Zoological Gardens at Peking, 280–1

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